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ABSTRACT

Section 309 of the Adult Education Act of 1966 provided discretionary grants for special projects and teacher training in adult basic education (ABE). The 309 program played an important role in innovations, recruitment, instructional materials, and teaching strategies, and it demonstrated how active Federal officials could boost state and local practices and policies. Yet, the Federal role antagonized some constituencies and figured in the program's demise. The U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education guided the program by setting priorities, soliciting and shaping proposals, awarding grants, and disseminating project information. This activist role affected the 309 program's accomplishments and impact on ABE, influencing such areas as policy, curriculum development, interstate efforts, print and electronic media use, and staff development. The program promoted communications and provided a sense of mission for the ABE field. Two major shortcomings, however, were the failure to build its own constituency and the alienation of a politically strong segment--state adult education directors. Lack of state-level involvement in policy and grant decisions and aggressive management by Federal officials led to the reconstitution of the 309 program as a state discretionary grant activity in 1974. The 309 program contributed significantly to the ABE field despite the lack of an elaborated, integrated dissemination system and despite too many low visibility projects. A revived Federal-level grants program that builds on past strengths and acknowledges previous shortcomings would better serve the diverse ABE community. (The appendixes include a list of potential 309 projects and a reference list of past project reports.) (SK)

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PROMOTING INNOVATION AND CONTROVERSY IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION: SECTION 309 OF THE ADULT EDUCATION ACT

Eugene Radwin

NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROJECT
FAR WEST LABORATORY

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PROMOTING INNOVATION AND CONTROVERSY IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION: SECTION 309 OF THE ADULT EDUCATION ACT

by
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Prepared for the

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Chapter 1

Section 309 of the Adult Education Act

Introduction

In 1964, Congress initiated federal support for local adult basic education [ABE] programs. Soon, thereafter, Congress also inaugrated an ABE discretionary grants program. The 309 program (so dubbed after its legislative mandate) was intended to help nurture the ABE field. And the program did spark innovations in ABE practice, policy, and staff development. However, the program also sparked controversy--controversy over specific projects, over the program's merit, and over federal 309 policy. In the end, the 309 program proved short lived. Nonetheless, it had an enduring impact--through the Adult Performance Level Project, for example--on the ABE field. Today, in fact, even those who once lobbied against it, have come to regret the program's end.

These facts alone are sufficient to prompt consideration of the 309 program and its role in ABE's development. Furthermore, a federal 309 program is now likely to be revived, and this possibility makes an investigation of the 309 program particularly germane. If a renewed 309 program can benefit from an understanding of its predecessor's successes, problems, and shortcomings, then perhaps it will not suffer the same fate.

The study reported herein probed into the history of the 309 program. The effort was undertaken to understand, in general, the role of federal education officials in promoting innovation in ABE, and to understand, more specifically, their role in the 309 program, the impact of the 309 program, and the problems that led to its demise. The project was also undertaken to offer recommendations that would be useful to a revived 309 program or a similar effort.

The study, as reported in the pages to follow, relied on 309 project reports and earlier evaluations of the 309 program as well as interviews with federal and state adult education officials and with the recipients of 309 grants. The study was not exhaustive and cannot lay claim to providing a definitive account and assessment of the 309 program. However, drawing on the written record and the informed opinions of those who had been involved with the program, this report details the types of 309 projects conducted and the areas in which they had impact; it examines the problems which beset the program; and it illuminates the role that federal officials had overall and in regard to specific 309 projects. These tasks provide a basis for assessing the 309 program, for supporting its reactivation, and for offering recommendations for the future.

The rest of the chapter reviews the founding and mandate of the 309 program. It considers such questions as: How did the program come to be? What were its legislated goals? Chapter 2 proceeds to examine the role of the federal government, and, in particular, the role of the Division of Adult Education and its long time director, Paul Delker. How did federal officials view the program? What did they seek to accomplish? How did they pursue their goals? In Chapter 3, the 309's accomplishments and impacts are considered. In what spheres did the program operate? What were its undertakings? What were its successes? Chapter 4 takes up the proverbial reverse side of the coin: What were the 309's problems and difficulties? Why, ultimately, was the program ended? The final Chapter, 5, offers an overall assessment of the 309 program, weighing both the positive and negative aspects. The chapter then argues for the need for a 309-type program and offers recommendations to help a revived program function as effectively as possible. Appendix A, it should be noted, offers suggestions--based largely on the interviews conducted with ABE officials, administrators, and researchers--for specific 309-type projects that are presently needed. Undergirding this entire report is an effort to bring attention to both an important part of ABE's early history and to the importance of ABE's history for its present and future.

Background to the 309 Program

Adult basic education has gone through a profound change in recent history. Twenty years ago, the educational needs of undereducated adults went largely unnoticed. A few programs in the military and in prisons, a few others in church-related settings composed the landscape of adult literacy efforts. As late as 1962, only eight state education departments had full time administrators for adult education, and twenty-two states had no such administrators at all (DeScantis, 1979, p. 7). Not surprisingly, therefore, as late as 1963, "only 160 out of 15,200 school systems [nationwide] offered adult basic education programs" (DeScantis, 1979, p. 8).

In the early 1960s, however, adult educators had begun to press for a national literacy program. Initially, Congress rebuffed these efforts. But in 1964, support for adult basic education was incorporated into the Economic Opportunity Act. This was "the first time the federal government allocated funds directly for literacy education" (Cook, 1977, p. 84). Ironically, though, the support was not provided through federal education legislation. Instead, based on the premise that educational deficiencies represented an economic liability, ABE funding was provided through War on Poverty legislation. Nonetheless, administrative responsibility for ABE was delegated to the U.S. Office of Education. And in 1966, ABE was transferred directly and fully into the U.S. Office of Education's province.

The federal ABE budget was meager at first, and would never reach the levels that ABE advocates sought (National Advisory Committee . . . 1968). Yet, the federal dollars had an immediate and decisive impact. In 1965, federal ABE funds first became available--about $4 million was appropriated that first year*. With this support, states supported local ABE programs in which nearly 38,000 adult students participated. By 1967, $26 million in federal appropriations supported ABE programs, which enrolled 388,000 students, in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories. This expansion of funds, programs, and students was to continue, if not quite so dramatically, into the mid 1970s (see Table 1, p. 6).

Federal ABE funds were distributed on a formula basis among the states and territories, and the funds were essentially targeted to support local ABE programs. Yet, program support per se was not sufficient, for early on the ABE field was underdeveloped. It faced a general "scarcity" of teachers and administrators, and "those that were undertrained" (Bosco, 1975, p. viii). The ABE field also faced a scarcity of methods and materials to recruit and instruct adult students (Adair, 1969). As noted above, prior to federal ABE funding, most state education departments lacked adult education staffs; in those states that did, moreover, the adult education division was not typically concerned with basic education (Delker, 1984a). In addition, only a dozen or so colleges and universities had degree programs in adult education, and those that did exist were chiefly involved with continuing education (Delker, 1984a).

From the outset, federal officials recognized that a national ABE effort required more than program funds, and from an early date, they were involved in identifying and helping to meet the field's needs. Thus, following passage of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act, federal education officials met with "leading adult educators to assess the most pressing needs of adult education" (Hoffman & Pagano, 1971, p. 12; see also, George Washington University, 1965). In addition, federal education officials helped initiate ABE teacher training programs during the summer of 1965. And in response to the field's needs for appropriate instructional strategies and materials, federal officials sponsored a comparative field test, beginning in March 1965, of four adult basic reading programs (Greenleigh Associates, Inc., 1966).

Federal efforts to develop the resources required for a national ABE program were, initially, somewhat constrained. The Economic Opportunities Act legislation (1964) provided no discretionary funds for developing ABE's resources. Thus, when federal officials organized the first teacher training institutes, the funding had to be provided by the Ford Foundation, and the field test of reading systems was funded, apparently, through the planning division of the Office of Ecomonic Opportunities, not through funds designated for ABE (Greenleigh Associates, 1966).

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*The initial ABE allocation had actually been for $18,612,000; however the funds became available so late in the fiscal year that only $4 million of it could be spent. The rest was held over to the following year (Delker, 1984a; National Advisory Council . . . 1976, p. 15).

The situation soon began to change, however. In 1965, the Economic Opportunities Act was amended so that up to five percent (5%) of the annual ABE allocation was available for teacher training purposes (Development Associates, 1980, p. 54). Then, in 1966, the section of the Economic Opportunities Act that provided for ABE support was repealed; in its stead, the Adult Education Act (1966) was enacted. And this legislation increased both the discretionary program funding and the mandate governing distribution of discretionary grants.

The Adult Education Act was, in intent, "essentially similar" to its predecessor (Bina & Downing, 1976, p. 35), and thus continued, and continued to expand, federal support for local ABE programs. But there were changes, too. First, ABE was made formally and legislatively part of the federal education structure--that is, the U.S. Office of Education. Secondly, the new legislation delegated from 10% to 20% of annual ABE appropriations for a discretionary grants program. Thirdly, these grants were to be used not only for staff training but also to develop ABE's material and strategic resources. Such discretionary authority was not unusual and frequently accompanied legislation organizing programmatic efforts (Delker, 1984b). The discretionary authority reflected an awareness that the ABE field required more than just program funds. As noted above, even before such funds were available federal officials had become involved in helping to identify and meet the needs of the newly emerging ABE field. The Economic Opportunities Act had been amended to provide federal officials with funds for staff training purposes; now under the Adult Education Act, federal officials gained greater funds and wider authority--authority which they were to actively employ.

Section 309 of the 1966 Adult Education Act empowered the U.S. Commissioner of Education to offer discretionary grants. The legislation specified that grants were to be used for special projects and for teacher training. Special projects grants were essentially intended to promote innovative practices and programs. As the concept of basic research had been deliberately excluded from the Section 309 language, special project grants could only sanction development, demonstration, and other applied research activities (Delker, 1984a).

Two categories of special projects were defined in the legislation. In the first case, special projects were those which would:

> involve the use of innovative methods, systems, materials, or programs which. . . may have national significance or be of special value in promoting effective programs (Adult Education Act, 1966, Sec. 309b, para. 1).

Special projects, so defined, were clearly and specifically intended to be of "national significance"--that is, to yield transferable results, influence national policy, and the like; however, Section 309b also mandated special projects which

> involve programs of adult education . . . which . . . have unusual promise in promoting a comprehensive approach to the problems of persons with basic educational deficiencies (para. 2).

With this paragraph as justification, federal officials directed 309 funds to support local, operational projects which were not intended, in themselves, to have broad-ranging impact. "Local impact" projects would, in fact, come to represent the majority of 309b special projects (Comptroller General, 1975, p. 14).

In addition, to national and local-level special projects, subsection 309c of the Adult Education legislation also authorized grants

> to provide training to persons engaged, or preparing to engage, as personnel in adult education programs.

And 309c grants were, over time, to be applied to meet the training needs not only of ABE teachers but paraprofessionals, college tutors, local program administrators and state adult education department staffs.

The 309 program was, in fact, relatively small in size. While the National Adult Education Advisory Committee (1968) recommended budgets of $20 and $30 million annually, the program received at maximum about $10 million. And from 1966, when they were initiated, through 1974, when they were ended, federal discretionary ABE grant appropriations totaled $71 million--a rather conservative amount by federal standards (see Table 1, P. 6).

Despite a modest budget, the program played an important role. From 1967 to 1974, approximately 83,000 ABE teachers and administrators participated in 309(c) sponsored training activities (National Advisory Council . . . 1976). 309(b) grants, for their part, promoted innovations in recruitment methods, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and program organization. 309(b) special project grants helped redefine the ABE mandate and set it on an adult-oriented footing. Moreover, the program was one of the few means federal officials had to influence the burgeoning ABE field, and as will be seen, federal officials made active use of it.

The program accomplished much. 309 grants initiated and/or supported some of the hallmarks of ABE's early history, including the Adult Performance Level project, the Appalachian Adult Education Center, and learning centers and individualized instructional approaches. Yet, to be certain, many 309 funded projects quickly came and went, leaving little discernible mark. The grants program also demonstrated how active, involved federal officials could boost local and state educational practices and policies. Yet, the federal role, at times, antagonized ABE constituencies and figured in the program's demise.

Table 1

Federal ABE Program State Grants and Student Enrollments, 309 Program Appropriations, Number of 309b Projects and of 309c Project Participants

Fiscal Year	Appropriations State Grants	ABE Student Enrollments	Appropriations 309b Special Projects	Number of 309b Projects	Appropriations 309c Teacher Training	Number of 309c Project Participants
1965[a]	$18,612,000	37,991	—	—	—	165[b]
1966[a]	19,689,000	377,660	—	—	$1,055,982[c]	982
1967	26,280,000	388,935	$1,520,162	13	1,399,838	1,197
1968	32,200,000	455,730	6,550,000	21	1,500,000	2,004
1969	36,000,000	484,626	7,000,000	28	2,000,000	1,587
1970	40,000,000	535,613	8,000,000	41	2,000,000	1,727
1971	44,875,000	620,922	7,000,000	49	3,000,000	3,360
1972	51,134,000	820,514	7,000,000	58	3,000,000	23,600
1973	74,834,000	822,469	7,000,000	55	3,000,000	23,500
1974	53,485,000	956,401	7,000,000	50	3,000,000	25,405

[a] In 1965 and 1966, federal adult basic education funds were authorized under the 1964 Economic Opportunities Act.

[b] Federal officials helped organize teacher training institutes in 1965; however, the Ford Foundation funded the effort.

[c] The 1965 Economic Opportunities Act amendments authorized teacher training appropriations.

Sources: *Adult Education Appropriation History*. (n.d.). Washington, DC: Division of Adult Education, U. S. Department of Education; Development Associates (1980). *An Assessment of the state-administered program of the adult education act. Final report*. Arlington, VA: Author; National Advisory Council on Adult Education. (1976). *An historical perspective: The Adult Education Act*. Washington, DC: Author.

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Overall, the 309 program has invited varied responses. The National Advisory Committee on Adult Education (1968) deemed it "essential to the rapid improvement of adult basic education" (p. 3) and viewed 309 projects as the "cutting edge of the Adult Basic Education program" (p. 25). Evaluations of the program in the late 1960s and early 1970s offered less enthusiastic responses (see, Comptroller General, 1975; General Electric, 1969). Congress, for its part, launched the program in 1966, ended it--as a federal operation--in 1974, and then re-mandated it in 1976, though without yet appropriating funds for its operation (Adult Education Act, 1966; 1974 Amendments . . . 1974; 1978 Ammendments . . . 1978). Furthermore, those who lobbied for an end to the program in 1974, now are lobbying for its restoration (e.g., Miller, 1984).

The 309 program deserves scrutiny, if for no other reason than to understand the controversy it has generated. But it also deserves scrutiny on other grounds. The grants program was initiated to develop the resources and capabilities of the ABE field. What role and impact did the 309 program have? What was its place in ABE's early history. Moreover, the program was very much a federal tool. How did federal officals employ it? What impact did they have on the program transferred from federal to state responsibility? This latter issue is particularly salient in that a 309-type program will likely be revived soon. This increases the need for an exploration of the program's strengths and, perhaps, avoidance of its shortcomings. The pages which follow seek to provide such an exploration.

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Chapter 2

The Federal Role

Introduction

The ABE legislation offered a rather skimpy mandate to the 309 program. Special projects and training programs were not very precisely described. Federal education officials therefore had considerable freedom to determine what constituted: "innovative methods, systems, materials or programs," "national significance," "programs of . . . unusual promise," "a comprehensive or coordinated approach," and other elements of the Section 309 language (Adult Education . . . 1966). Federal officials were to make considerable use of the freedom afforded them. Essentially, it was they who shaped the 309 program, not the authorizing legislation. And thus to understand the 309 program, it is not enough to examine the legislation or, even, to examine 309 projects and what they did or did not accomplish. Rather, to understand the 309 program, attention must be given the policies and concerns of those federal officials responsible for its operation.

In legislative terms, that responsibility fell to the U.S. Commissioner of Education; in practical, day-to-day terms, that responsibility fell to the Division of Adult Education, within the U.S. Office of Education. The Division, in turn, has left an indelible and most vivid imprint on the 309 grants program. To be sure, the Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education (in which the Division of Adult Education was housed),* and the Commissioner of Education's Office have all influenced the 309 program; nonetheless, it was the Division's leadership and senior staff which have figured most significantly in the 309's direction, impact, and, to some extent, difficulties.

The Division of Adult Education was originally headed by Jules Pagano. In 1968, Paul Delker was appointed director, and he has headed the Division ever since. Delker had been an administrator with the Peace Corps, and he brought a broad social perspective and a strong social commitment to his stewardship of ABE. For Delker, ABE did not simply represent skills development but "a powerful tool for social change" (Delker, 1969, p. 7). ABE, in Delker's view, offered a means for helping people "become more self-reliant, more fully human, and better equipped for . . . participation in a rapidly changing society" (p. 1). Delker's

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*As a result of administrative reshufflings, the Division of Adult Education has, over time, been part of the Bureau of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education; the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education; and, currently the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education.

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orientation and, in at least one case, his Peace Corps background were shared by others in the Division of Adult Education (DeScantis, 1984).

Yet, whatever the concerns and perceptions of Delker and his staff, Congress had deliberately designed the ABE system to have a strong state bias (DeScantis, 1979). The Adult Education Act prohibited "federal control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution or school system" (Bina & Downing, 1976, p. 35), and thus, federal officials had limited control over local ABE efforts. As a consequence, the 309 program took on special significance.

309 grants offered the Division of Adult Education "leverage" at the state and local levels (DeScantis, 1979, p. 17). Indeed, it was one of the only means of leverage at the disposal of federal officials, and Delker and Division staffers were to rely on it heavily. They employed the program to address problems of underdevelopment--not, in this case, of underdeveloped countries but of an underdeveloped educational system: Adult Basic Education. They applied the grants program to develop the ABE field's capacities and to offer it direction and definition. They were aggressive in shaping the 309 program--in setting its goals, initiating projects, and seeking to influence ABE. Yet, these federal officials were not arbitrary nor isolated from the ABE field. Quite the contrary. According to those interviewed for this study, the Division of Adult Education and Delker, in particular, were open to advice and responsive to ideas from the ABE field and actively sought to keep abreast of research and training developments (e.g., Aker, 1984; Darkenwald, 1984; Harman, 1984; Spear, 1984). Yet, with this said, the 309 program still clearly reflected and promulgated a federal agenda.

To understand the 309 program, then, the federal impact on the program must be considered--both in terms of the nature of that impact, and the manner in which it was realized. How did the Division of Adult Education and its director affect the 309 program? How did they accomplish what they accomplished? To answer these questions--and thereby understand the impact of Delker and others on the 309 program--it is useful to examine the specific roles that federal officials played in regard to 309 goals, grant awards, proposals, and priorities.

Priorities and Grants

The 309 program was very much a federal program. The program's direction was set and its dollars allocated by several levels of federal bureaucrats, stretching from the Division of Adult Education through the Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education and the U.S. Office of Education to rarified sections of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Darkenwald, 1974). The HEW secretary's office, while not frequently part of the 309 process, was almost certainly involved in decisions to award 309 grants to Model-Cities programs and to an academy for undereducated postal workers (Delker, 1984b). More typically, though, the 309 program functioned within the U.S. Commissioner of Education's sphere. For the most part, the priorities which guided the 309 program directly reflected or evolved from the Commissioner's national education goals (Parker, 1984). In 1972, for example,

> all Section 309(b) funds . . . [were] to be applied to targeted demonstrations supporting four *Office of Education objectives*: Model Cities adult education; the adult Right to Read Effort; Career Education; and Meeting Special Needs of Educationally Disadvantaged adults (Worthington, 1972, p. 1; emphasis added).

The Commissioner's office also processed 309 grant awards in some cases--309 supported Right-to-Read projects, for example (Delker, 1984b).

The Division of Adult Education, itself, afforded considerable direction to the 309 program (Eyre, 1984). It was at the initiative of the Division and Paul Delker specifically that a regional approach to staff development was made a national 309 priority (Brown, 1984). Division officials, in general, helped determine the official, posted-in-the-Federal-Register 309 priorities (Delker, 1984a). These priorities could be quite detailed. In 1974, for example, not only was adult career education promoted as a 309 priority but very specific career education priorities were stipulated, including

> Demonstration projects involving approximately 5 employers, each of which would experiment with models which have a common adult education component. . . .
>
> Demonstration projects which are jointly administered by a State education agency and some other State agency . . . for educationally disadvantaged public service employees. . . .
>
> A study of practices in industry which treat the employment structure itself as a part of an adult learning system. . . .
>
> Studies which analyze several current industry- and labor-sponsored adult basic education programs which do not receive State or Federal assistance (Special Projects and Teacher Training . . . 1973, pp. 34560-34561).

Through their influence on 309 priorities, Division of Adult Education leaders sought to employ the 309 program as an instrument to develop the ABE field's capacities, including curricula and assessment materials, recruitment strategies, teacher and administrator corps, state adult education staffs, training resources, and so forth (Delker, 1984a). Delker, moreover, employed the 309 program to offer definition and direction to the ABE field. He committed 309 funds to develop the Adult Performance Level project (Delker, 1984b; Harman, 1984) and, thereby, to promote a national ABE agenda (see Chapter 3). In such fashions, Delker and other federal officials were shaping both the 309 program and the ABE field itself. Indeed, they were shaping the 309 program in order to shape ABE.

Proposal Garnering and Shaping

Under Delker's leadership, the Division of Adult Education did not passively await the submission of proposals to undertake 309 projects. Indeed, early on, it could not affort to wait, for not enough quality proposals were being submitted (Delker, 1984b). Consequently, the Division actively sought to entice researchers and project developers to consider adults and adult basic education, and the Division sought to encourage and, if necessary, to shape proposals.

To some extent, the Division relied on formal requests to generate proposals. Thus, an RFP [Request for Proposal]-like process was issued to attract researchers to the task of setting functional Adult Performance Levels (Delker, 1984; Harman, 1984). Official 309 priorities also laid out specific goals for researchers and project developers to pursue (see above). Apparently, though, proposals were often generated by the Division through an informal process (Delker, 1984a; 1984b).

During the 1960s and early 1970s, less stringent procedures than now exist governed relationships between federal education staffs and the communities they served. As a result, Delker, for example, might ask an adult education researcher to consider what could be done about "X" problem or issue. The researcher might then develop an outline or prospectus for Delker's consideration and feedback; eventually, thereby, Delker's original inquiry might result in submission of a formal proposal to the 309 program (Ast, 1984; Spear, 1984). Conversely, a researcher might take the initiative. Before developing a proposal, he or she might discuss the proposed project with Division staffers to see if they were at all interested (Ast, 1984). Even the formal submission process had, at times, an interactive cast to it. Thus, in 1972, applicants for 309 grants were requested to submit "a brief concept paper," outlining the goals and methods of their proposed project. Division staffers, then, on the basis of this concept paper, recommended or not, "development of a complete proposal" (Worthington, 1972, p. 2). Such interactions, formal and informal, provided federal officials with additional opportunities to guide and mold the 309 program.

Division of Adult Education officials would, at times, encourage researchers and project directors to seek 309 funds. Delker, for example, encouraged

Warren Ziegler (1984), to prepare future-oriented analyses of ABE policy;

World Education, to adapt its Third World-oriented literacy program, Project AIM, to this country (Rivera, 1984);

and North Carolina State University, to investigate computer-assisted ABE instruction (Lumsden, 1984).

Others within the Division of Adult Education as well as regional Office of Education officials offered similar encouragement to other potential 309 applicants (Brown, 1984; Bobbi Walden, 1984).

To reiterate, then, the Division of Adult Education, under Delker's leadership, actively sought projects to fund. And, once again, thereby the Division worked to shape both the 309 program and the field the program was intended to serve.

Proposal Decisions

The Division of Adult Education itself reviewed 309 grant applications and decided, in most cases, which projects to fund. This authority provided the Division with a most direct means to develop and shape the ABE field--as is, perhaps, best illustrated by the array of 309 projects described in Chapter 3. What can be emphasized at this juncture is the Division's activist posture vis-a-vis funding decisions. For example, to gain 309 funding, Delker insisted that a regional staff development project in the South had to include at least one Black college per state (Brown, 1984). In other instances, Delker circumvented state policies which would have restricted the flow of 309 monies. Mississippi's state education department required local communities to put up one half of the 10 percent match required for 309 grants. As with a similar policy in Louisiana, the state was effectively preventing poor, Black communities from receiving 309 grants. Delker, however, would not abide the restrictions and arranged for exceptions to the matching-funds' requirement (Delker, 1984b).

In exercising its responsibility for making grant decisions, the Division was willing to assume some risks. Under Delker's leadership, the Division funded non-traditional ABE sponsors, including a Jessie Jackson-headed group in Chicago (DeScantis, 1979) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Georgia.* The Division also funded non-traditional curricular approaches, such as projects linking ABE to personal development (Adkins, 1984) and to problem-solving activities (Rivera, 1975). Risk-taking was further evidenced by support for projects based on admittedly "vague" proposals--vague given the "plowing-new-ground" nature of the work proposed (Kincaid, 1984). Thus, through their authority over 309 funding decisions, officials of the Division of Adult Education again asserted their impact on the 309 program.

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*From a yearly listing of 309 grant recipients supplied to the author by the Division of Adult Education.

Project Operations and Dissemination

The efforts of the Division of Adult Education to shape the 309 program were not limited in their focus to priorities, grants, and proposals. Division staffers were also involved in the operation, to some extent, and, much more so, the dissemination of 309 projects. The Division played a somewhat limited role in project operations (Ast, 1984; Kincaid, 1984). Projects were granted considerable "autonomy" (Irish, 1984), were not imposed upon (Crouch, 1984), and were allowed to do "their thing" (Shelton, 1984). Division officials did offer researchers and project directors encouragement (Adkins, 1984), helped locate sites for pilot demonstrations (Rivera, 1984) and field tests (Northcutt, 1984), and reviewed project products (Caplan, 1984). For the 309 project that led to *Evaluation in Adult Basic Education* (Grotelueschen, Gooler, & Knox, 1976), the Division funded workshops "throughout the United States" at which ABE teachers, local and state administrators, and federal officials "provided critical review of . . . [the project's] ideas and . . . instruments" (p. vii). Delker, in at least one instance, helped "put flesh on the bones" of a major project, not by imposing his agenda but by offering useful suggestions of the "did you know about 'X'" ilk (Spear, 1984). Not everything was rosy, to be sure. Federal regulations as well as commuication problems with federal officials interferred with the ability of a large-scale, multi-state project to meet all of its original goals (Southwestern Cooperative Education Laboratory, 1970). Overall, though, Delker and his staff offered researchers and developers a context which they found to be extremely supportive (Adkins, 1984; Brown, 1984; Northcutt, 1984).

If the Division of Adult Education was not deeply involved in the day-to-day operation of 309 projects, the same could not be said when it came to project dissemination. Federal officials encouraged 309 directors to develop contacts with each other (Howard, 1984; Spear, 1984; Bobbi Walden, 1984). Delker et al. also encouraged--and arranged for--309 directors to present at ABE conferences and meetings (Caplan, 1984; Kincaid, 1984; Lumsden, 1984; Northcutt, 1984; Ziegler, 1984). Moreover, federal officials "encouraged and in some cases required newly funded special [309] projects to work with and, where possible, through the regional staff development projects" (DeScantis & Qazilbash, n.d., p. 12). They also funded, as is described below, studies of 309 dissemination problems and supported a model dissemination program. In general, federal officials sought to get the message out about 309 results and products, which represents a rather natural consequence of their efforts to employ the 309 program to introduce change and innovation.

Influences on Federal Policymakers

While the 309 program was largely shaped by federal educational officials, in particular Division of Adult Education staff, the ABE community at large had some impact. At times, the Division hired consultants to advise on various matters, including those relating to the 309 program (Harman, 1984; Ziegler, 1984). On a less formal basis, Delker and/or his staff would also seek outside advice in regard to ideas for specific undertakings (Aker, 1984; Eyster, 1984). Moreover, much interchange occurred and much feedback was gathered, at least as far as Delker (1984a) was concerned, at national conferences and other get-togethers of the ABE community. In addition, federal officials participated in conferences designed to assess the national ABE effort, including 309 program efforts (see, Adair, 1969).

309 projects influenced the 309 program. At times, results from one project led to subsequent 309 undertakings. Thus, a national teacher-training survey led, in part, to a national center to coordinate regional staff development projects (Spear, 1984). Also, 309 projects were sponsored specifically to inform 309 program policy and practice (e.g., General Electric, 1969). Most significantly in this regard, researchers at the Center for Adult Education (Teachers College, Columbia University) undertook a multi-dimensional 309 project (a) to "design and demonstrate a strategy for determining priorities for [309] special projects" (Mezirow & Irish, 1974, p. 2) and (b) to analyze 309 dissemination difficulties (Darkenwald, Beder, Adelman, 1974). These projects, in turn, led to a 309-funded model dissemination system (Mezirow, et al., n.d.), to the inclusion of local- and state-level input into 309 priority setting, and to the use of outside experts to evaluate 309 proposal applications (Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974, p. 3).

These changes only occured a year or two before the 309 program, as a federal entity came to an end, and thus had limited impact. When they were in effect, it was chiefly 309 project directors and adult education researchers who sought input into 309 goals and grants awards (Delker, 1984a). In general, these groups more than other parts of the ABE community seemed to have had the greatest influence on the 309's administrators. It should be noted that neither the legislatively mandated National Advisory Committee on Adult Education nor the later National Advisory Council on Adult Education were much involved in establishing 309 policies and 309 priorities (Eyre, 1984). They were, at times, though, involved in reviewing said policies and priorities (Delker, 1984a).

Conclusions

The 309 program was a federal program. It reflected federal goals and concerns. The 309 program offered federal officials a tool for influencing an otherwise state-oriented ABE system.

Federal officials, mostly on their own, established 309 program priorities and awarded 309 grants. Under Paul Delker's long time leadership, the Division of Adult Education made active use of the 309 program to develop ABE capacities and to shape ABE goals. To these ends, the Division was able to employ its authority over funding decisions. Moreover, the Division was actively involved in encouraging and shaping proposals. It was also involved in the operation of 309 projects, at least to the extent of providing a supportive environment for the conduct of research and development. The Division was particularly involved in project dissemination. If the 309 program was to influence the ABE field, the the field needed to be aware of 309 efforts and results. Ultimately, much of the 309 program's impact and success, as discussed in Chapter 3, can be traced back to the active role that the Division played in directing and administering the program. Many of the program's most significant projects were initiated and/or spread by federal officials. Yet, the activist role played by Delker and his staff had its negative consequences as well, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3

309 Program Impacts

Introduction

The accomplishments of the 309 program are controversial. Some contend that the program had little enduring impact (Kincaid, 1984); others maintain that the program helped shape the ABE field for the better (Aker, 1984; Delker, 1984a). Evaluations done during the 309's lifetime offered what can be called at best mixed reviews. They found that the majority of 309 funded projects were not intended to have far-reaching impact (Comptroller General, 1975) and that the 309 developed innovations were not well known to local ABE practitioners and administrators (Griffin & Kent, 1974; Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974).

Such assessments may have belied the 309's accomplishments, however. In sufficient numbers, small, locally-oriented grants can promote large changes. And, indeed, multiple 309 grants to small curricular projects seem to have contributed to a broad movement to redefine the goals of ABE. Moreover, ABE practitioners may not have been familiar with 309 projects by name--may not have heard of the Adult Armchair or Appalachian projects, for example. Yet, this does not mean that practitioners were unfamiliar with 309 inspired innovations--such as, home-based instruction, coping-skills curricula, and the like. Of the many ABE teachers and administrators who have profited from the Last Gamble on Education (Mezirow, Darkenwald, & Knox, 1975), few likely know that it resulted from a 309-funded study (Center for Adult Education, 1971).

To assess the 309 program's impact thus was and remains difficult. Yet, it is possible to consider the types of 309 projects that were supported, the goals of these, and, to some extent, at least, the impacts they had. This perspective offers a measure of the 309's accomplishments and worth.

Policy Projects

Among other purposes, federal officials employed the 309 program to analyze the workings of and provide guidance to the federal ABE effort. Grants of this sort were awarded to develop "a normative description of ABE practice" (Center for Adult Education, 1971, p. 1), to investigate the impact of federal ABE funds (Griffith et al., 1974), to identify exemplary ABE programs (Sjorgren & Jacobson, 1976a; 1976b), to identify exemplary 309 special projects (General Electric, 1969) to survey the research and development priorities of ABE teachers and administrators (Mezirow & Irish, 1974), to assess 309 teacher-training projects (Spear, et al., 1972a; 1972b; 1972c; 1973), and to evaluate 309 program policies and practices (Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974).

What did such projects accomplish? One policy project (Center for Adult Education, 1971), for example, resulted in the *Last Gamble on Education* (Mezirow, Darkenwald, & Knox, 1975), which has provided continuing guidance to state and local ABE practitioners (Eyster, 1984). The original study, moreover, played a role in legislative changes permitting ABE program funds to be granted to non-public school institutions (Darkenwald, 1984). Another 309 grant, which provided an almost pholosophical exegesis on ABE's future (Ziegler, 1974), helped federal officials introduce participatory planning and outreach requirements into ABE legislation (Delker, 1984b; see also, Development Associates, 1980, p. 59). In still other instances (as noted in Chapter 2), 309 funded projects to identify research priorities (Mezirow & Irish, 1974) and to analyze 309 program dissemination difficulties (Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974). Such efforts led federal officials to seek more involvement from the field in 309 program decisions (Darkenwald, 1984) and also led to a 309 supported pilot dissemination project (Mezirow, et al., n.d.).

The Adult Performance Level (APL) project represented a different type of 309 policy project. On the surface, the APL study was not a policy at all. APL sought to identify the functional skills and knowledge levels required for everyday adult life. However, federal officials intended that those functional or performance levels, once defined, would

> *constitute the objectives of a system of adult basic education* They . . . [would] also determine the target polulation [e.g., adults performing below the identified functional levels]. Furthermore, *all subsequent adult syllabuses and curricula [would] be based on the APL[s] and . . . [would] derive from . . . [them]* (APL Request for Proposal cited in A Research and Development Project . . . 1972; emphasis added).

The APL project was thus intended to establish a national ABE agenda, which certainly constitutes a policy goal of considerable significance. The APL project had considerable impact. It served to publicize the extent of adult illiteracy in America and, thereby, engender support for the national ABE effort (McCune, 1984; Miller, 1984). The study prompted programs and curricula based on and geared to adult experience. In particular, the APL project played "a pivotal role" in the growth of competency-based adult education (Darkenwald, 1984).*

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*By 1980, two thirds of local ABE projects were using or "encouraging" competency-based approaches, and about one third were using APL curricula materials specifically (Development Associates, 1980, p.84).

The project also prompted others to examine adult functional competencies (see review by Fischer, 1980). In the end, APL served to legitimate a truly adult oriented adult basic education.

309 supported policy analyses and evaluations had, then, considerable impact. While the results of such projects may not always have been evident at the local ABE level--though this was certainly not the case with the APL project and the Last Gamble on Education--the policy projects provided the basis for ABE legislative changes; offered guidance to federal, state and local administrators; and helped offer direction to the ABE enterprise. And therein, the projects also testified to the potential efficacy of the 309 grants program.

Curriculum Alternatives

The APL project, as just noted, helped redefine ABE goals and curricula. However, prior to the APL effort, concurrent with it, and afterwards, other 309 projects also helped shape the agenda of ABE. As a group, these 309 efforts broadened the ABE curriculum, expanding its parameters beyond literacy, computation skills, and GED preparation to include various life skills--what have come to be called "coping skills". For example, an early 309 grant was awarded to a demonstration project which integrated basic skills instruction with "preparation for daily life, including . . . problems like personal hygiene, nutrition, family relationships, consumer education, and the social behaviors which affect job success" (Paige, 1969, p. 44). Other 309 projects tied basic skills preparation to the development of "homemaking skills" (Beasley, 1972, p. 3) or attempted to capitalize upon familar concerns (e.g., the Des Moines Family Learning Project and the Pina County Special Experiment, both reported in Innovations Inventory . . . 1974). Still others emphasized such very basic "coping skills" as self-confidence and personal pride (Navajo Adult Basic Education, 1972, 1973).

Multiple 309 projects offered basic skills training in conjunction with job counseling and/or job training (see, for example, Adult Basic Education Project: Career Centers Program, 1974; B'nai B'rith Adult Career and Counseling Center [Innovations Inventory . . . 1974]; Cabbagestalk, 1969; and Sharp, 1972. With 309 support, curricula were also developed for specific populations of adults, including agricultural workers making the transition to industrial jobs (University of Arkansas project, reported in General Electric, 1969), Native Americans (Oregon College of Education, 1972) and emotionally disturbed adults (Missouri Division of Mental Health's Project Evolve*).

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*Cited in untitled, undated compliation of selected 309 project abstracts provided by Division of Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education.

In most of the aforementioned projects, the curriculum was developed for use by a single, local ABE program. These 309 projects were of the "local impact" variety (see Chapter 1, p. 5), and they were not intended to develop results or products that could be employed elsewhere. Other curricula projects, however, reflected the program's mandate for projects of "national significance". These were not tied to specific local ABE programs but aimed to develop transferable results that could be used widely. Projects of this sort included the Adkins Life Skills Program, which integrated basic skills attainments with a carefully sequenced approach to achieve social, personal, and career maturity (Adkins, 1973); Project AIM, which sought to develop basic and coping skills through a "process of problem-inquiry leading to a practical action" (Rivera, 1975, p.17); and a program of "civic literacy", which connected literacy development to social and political action (Ziegler, 1974).

The national and local curricula projects were of varying quality and had varying impact. Some projects, to be sure, quickly came and went. Others, like the Adkins program, endure (Adkins, 1984). More importanty, through these projects, the 309 program promoted recognition that undereducated adults have multiple, interconnected needs and that attending to educational problems alone is not sufficient. Furthermore, 309 projects helped expand the ABE program's resources to meet these needs. Thereby, the grants program worked to enrich both the perspective and the tools of the ABE field.

Programming Innovations

An enriched, creative ABE curriculum would be useless if the intended audience was not being served. Not surprisingly, therefore, 309 funds supported many innovative approaches which aimed to attract adult students, hold on to them, and help them (the students) reach their goals. Efforts of this sort encompassed various aspects of ABE programming, including: recruitment, population focus, format, locale, sponsorship, and staffing. To be more specific, the 309 program funded alternatives in:

program recuitment, including

door-to-door recruitment of potential students by their neighbors (e.g., Adult Armchair Education Project . . . n.d.; Project POR FIN [Irish, 1980]) and by college students (Berea College, 1972);

and experimental comparisons of different recruitment strategies (Project Reach [Irish, 1980]; also Appalachian Adult Education Center, 1974; 1975).

program population focus, that is, developing programs for specific populations, such as

inner city poor (Cabbagestalk, 1969; Hanberry & Dahlke, 1974; Paige, 1969);

rural poor (e.g., Quitman County Mississippi Adult Learning Program*; Experiment in Motivating Functionally Illiterate to Learning [National Advisory Committee . . . 1969]);

Native Americans (e.g., Gila River Indian Community, 1973; Navajo Adult Basic Education, 1973, 1974);

Hispanics (POR FIN [Irish, 1980]; Southwestern Collaborative Educational Laboratories, 1969; 1970);

plantation workers (reported by Delker, 1984);

and migrant farm workers, in the Southeast (Brannigan, 1969) and Southwest (see, Cook, 1977, p. 91).

program format, in particular supporting

home-based learning (Adult Armchair Education Project . . . n.d.; POR-FIN, n.d.);

the learning center approach (Ast, 1970; Deaton, 1975; Bobbi Walden, 1984; also, Sourifman, 1970);

and the individualized teaching method favored in such centers (Research for Better Schools, 1972; see also, Cognitive Style Mapping . . . 1975; Pyfer, 1972).

program locale, situating programs in such settings as

inner-city homes (Dorman, 1973; Howard, 1969),

rural homes (Pina County Special Experimental Project [Innovations Inventory . . . 1974]);

Head Start Centers (Houghton, 1969);

community centers, jails, and half-way houses for alcoholics (Gila River Indian Community, 1973);

portable vans (Brannigan, 1969);

and on-the-job (Parson, 1969) and job-training sites (T.U.N.E., n.d.).

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*Cited in untitled, undated compilation of selected 309 project abstracts provided by Division of Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education.

program sponsorship, developing collaborative efforts with labor unions and businesses (EDCON Associates, 1972; Laborers International Union in General Electric, 1969; Operation Breakthrough in Innovations Inventory . . . 1974; Parsons, 1969);

manpower, welfare, and other government agencies (Cabbagestalk, 1969);

libraries and public school systems (Eyster, 1984; Paige, 1969);

and post-secondary institutions (e.g., T.U.N.E., n.d.; see also, National Advisory Committee . . . 1969).

and program staffing, including the use, as instructors and counselors, of

community members and paraprofessionals (Gila River . . . 1973; Howard, 1969; Howard's ABC's in Innovations Inventory, 1974);

and college students (Berea College, 1972);

and the development of a volunteer corps--private and through the federal ACTION program--to work with undereducated adults (Adult Armchair Education Program, 1972; Literacy Volunteers of America, 1974).

As with the curricular innovations, 309 program innovations varied considerably in impact. Some were small and, in themselves, had little impact beyond the students immediately served. The Adult Armchair project, however, brought national attention to home-learning and peer-tutoring strategies (Aker, 1984; Eyster, 1984), and it also provided adult educators with a different and more positive image than they often had of inner-city, minority-group adults (Miller, 1984). Through support of various programmatic efforts, big and small alike, the 309 program served to promote the idea of shaping ABE efforts to the needs and characteristics of adult learners, and the grants program also served to develop a host of strategies and formats geared to adult learners' needs.

Interstate and Regional Efforts

309 grants were awarded to a variety of projects which crossed state boundaries. In some instances, these projects aimed to introduce a particular change or innovation in multiple settings. For example, Idaho State University (1973) received 309 funds to shore up ABE programs at six Indian reservations in five states. And, Project Communi-Link (1973) involved "31 pilot communities in 14 western states" in a process whereby basic education activities were linked to community problem-solving efforts (p. v).

Other interstate projects were of a more developmental character. For example, the Albuquerque-based Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory (1969;1970), in conjunction with universities and ABE centers in New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Oregon, obtained 309 funding for a multidimensional approach to helping illiterate Mexican-Americans. Drawing on their particular strengths, different components of this consortium developed ESL videotapes, a basic ESL curriculum, a teacher training package, a mobile instructional van, a clearinghouse of ABE and ESL materials, and so forth.

To a certain extent, the accomplishments of the interstate and regional 309 projects could be discussed in terms of other categories employed herein. Nonetheless, the interstate and regional projects made distinct contributions. Thus, the Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory's effort, among others, highlighted the benefits of pooling resources--of bringing regionwide experience, talent, and expertise to bear on ABE issues.

The regional projects also demonstrated the effectiveness of what might be termed a systems approach. The Appalchian Adult Education Center, most notably, undertook a broad-based effort to "the quality and efficiency of ABE in the Appalachian region" (General Electric, 1969, p. 18). In up to 13 states, the Center conducted and coordinated a program of demonstration, research, training, and dissemination activities (Eyster, 1970); thereby integrating 309 special project grants with teacher training ones. The Center developed career- and family-oriented ABE programs (Appalachian Adult Education Center, 1973); promoted adoption of learning centers and home-based instruction (Deaton, 1975; Easter, 1984); and investigated educational television, adult learning, recruitment strategies, and GED preparation (Appalachian Adult Education Center, 1971; 1975, Deaton, 1975).

Under the Center's leadership (Wilson, 1970), specific projects included:

in Alabama, a demonstration of video-tape materials for instructional and recruitment purposes;

in Mississippi, development of a low-reading level newspaper to distribute to isolated, undereducated adults;

in Kentucky, a collaborative effort among local, county, state, regional, and federal agencies to support a public school ABE program;

in Virginia, use of paraprofessionals to serve as links between ABE students and ABE programs;

in West Virginia, assessment of the long-term impact of ABE on students' family, community, and work lives;

in Maryland, evaluation of the usefulness of typing-skills instruction as a means of motivating and teaching ABE pupils generally;

in Ohio, an experimental comparison of different ABE program strategies;

in New York, a demonstration of the need for and establishment of ABE programs in the rural Southwest region of the state.

The Center achieved considerable success in its wide-ranging approach, and it was well regarded and well known at the time of its operation (Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974; General Electric, 1969) and in retrospect (Delker, 1984; Ast, 1984; Freeman, 1984; Hunter & Harman, 1979).

In summation, then, through support of interstate and regional projects, the 309 program demonstrated how ABE issues could be addressed through broad-scale pooling of resources and through integrated, multi-faceted approaches. In addition, through support of interstate/regional projects, the 309 program helped draw attention to and demonstrate the educational significance of cultural and environmental factors. And, as will be discussed below, regional approaches to staff development proved particularly effective.

Print and Electronic Media Projects

The 309 program helped "draft" the print and electronic media to the ABE cause. The assistance varied. An early 309 grant brought together educational publishers, adult educators, and federal officials at a conference to encourage development of commerically published ABE materials (Adult and Continuing Education Resource Center, 1970; also, Ast, 1984). Over time, other 309 grants supported evaluations and field tests of instructional and assessment materials (Leibert, 1973; McGuigan et al., 1972; Programmed Instructional . . . 1972) as well as the development of new materials, including Adult Performance Level tests and curricula, and other competency-oriented adult education materials (e.g., Adult Performance Level Related Education Products . . . 1975; Career Education for Adults . . . 1975a; 1975b; 1975c).

Along with efforts--local and national--to develop curriculum materials, the 309 program also sponsored efforts to collect and review such materials and disseminate them to the ABE field. One such effort, Project CABEL, was organized by cities and countries in Northern Virginia and received 309 funds in 1967 and 1968 (Griswold, 1969). And for three years, beginning in 1970, 309 monies supported a National Multimedia Center for Adult Basic Education at Montclair State College in New Jersey (Ast, 1984).

In addition, the 309 program supported and encouraged the application of nonprint media and technologies to ABE concerns. With 309 funds, experiments were tried employing television and, to a lesser extent, radio for recruitment and instructional purposes (Educational Television for Disadvantaged Adults . . . 1974; Project BEAM, 1971; The RFD Project . . . 1972; Wiesner, 1975; see also Appalachian Adult Education Center, 1974; Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory, 1969).* Also, the 309 program funded a four year long effort to develop and assess computer-assisted instructional methods and materials (Adair, 1969; Cole, 1971; Small, 1970).

These print and technological projects seemingly had mixed results. Several of the television projects had, in their own terms, limited success at best (see, Appalachian Adult Education Center, 1974, Project BEAM, 1971). And computer-assisted instruction was judged expensive, difficult to master, and not superior to other instructional approaches (Cole, 1971; Lumsden, 1984). However, a demonstration and development effort like the 309 program must allow for failure, and, in fact, learning what does not work is almost as important as learning what does. Moreover, far from all and maybe even most, 309 print and electronic media projects can be deemed failures. The University of Notre Dame's Project REACH, for example, demonstrated that television could be an effective ABE recruitment tool (Irish, 1980). And the need for an ABE Clearninghouse proved sufficiently strong so that the 1974 Adult Education Act amendments specifically authorized establishing one. Finally, whether or not a direct outcome of the 309 supported conference, commercial publishers came to develop more and more ABE materials. Thus, in this arena as in others, the 309 program served to enhance the capabilities of the, then, emerging ABE field.

Training Institutes and Regional Staff Development

As earlier noted, staff development was a congressionally mandated purpose of the 309 program, and staff development was to be one of its significant contributions. From 1965 through 1971, 309 staff development activities primarily consisted of summer training institutes. At multiple sites around the country (typically one per each of the ten HEW regions), two to three week long training sessions were held--some for teachers, some for teacher trainers, and some for local program administrators

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*An untitled, undated collection of selected 309 projects abstracts put together by the Division of Adult Education describes other media-oriented 309 grants, including development of GED preparation televison videotapes by both the South Carolina State Education Department and the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments; ABE recruitment pilots for television by the Illinois Department of Education; and a t.v. instruction program for rural adults by the University of Wisconsin.

(Hoffman & Pagano, 1971; National University Extension Association, 1966; 1967). Depending on the region and the audience, the institutes focused on:

> general introductions to ABE and the educationally disadvantaged (National University Extension Association, 1966),
>
> administrative matters--planning, programming, and budgeting, perhaps (Marshall & Dick, 1969),
>
> or the needs of particular ABE client groups, such as urban Blacks (Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education, 1972), or Native Americans and Eskimos (Oregon College of Education, 1972).

The summer institute approach was also applied to those higher in the ABE hierachy. In 1970, for example, a two week long institute was organized

> to provide State [Adult Education Department] Directors an opportunity to view their efforts from new perspectives, to learn to better communicate . . . and to become the catalytic agents of a learning society (Aker & Schroeder, 1970, p. 9).

The institutes helped to increase the capabilities of the ABE professional staff, and they were well regarded by participants (Aker & Schroeder, 1970; Hoffman & Pagano, 1971); however, the institute approach was expensive-about $1,000 per participant (see Table 1, p. 6); it was risky--if a participant later left the ABE field, the investment was lost (Parker, 1984); and it only reached a limited number of individuals--about 10,000 from 1966 to 1971 (National Advisory Council . . . 1976). These shortcomings led federal officials eventually to apply 309 staff development funds in a different fashion--one which aimed to establish an ongoing training capacity for the ABE field.

The approach originated in the Southeast, beginning in 1969. In each of what were to eventually be eight participating states, 309-project funds subsidized development of undergratduate and graduate programs in adult education. In addition, participating post-secondary institutions (a) offered off-campus courses for credit to ABE practitioners and administrators, (b) provided continuing consultation to local ABE programs, (c) assisted and trained state adult education department staffs, and (d) developed a regional seminar program at which state and local practitioners could together consider ABE issues (Brown, 1984; Southern Regional Education Board, 1970).

The staff development project's impact was immediate and impressive. In the first year of operation, 13 post-secondary institutions inaugurated adult education programs for the first time; the number of graduate adult education programs expanded from 6-16; nearly 3,000 students enrolled in credit courses in adult education, and

> 7,800 teachers, nearly 90 percent of the Southeast Adult Basic Education staff attended courses, institutes, seminars, and workshops, and received supplementary training (Southern Regional Educational, 1970, p. ix; emphasis added).

These results did not go unnoticed, and federal officials decided to promulgate the South's staff development model on a national basis (Brown, 1984; Delker, 198a). From 1972-1974, over 80 percent of 309 staff development funds were set aside for regional staff development efforts (Worthington, 1972). The resulting projects reached ten or more times as many ABE professionals as had the summer training institutes (see Table 1, p. 6). The regional approach established post-secondary programs in all fifty states and helped increase the number of post-secondary programs from a dozen in the mid-1960s to about 100 by 1975 (Delker, 1984a). These programs, in turn, have provided the ABE field with a continuing staff development capacity (Aker, 1984; Mezirow, 1984). In the eyes of many, the regional staff development projects remain one of the 309 program's most significant and enduring contributions (Brown, 1984; Delker, 1984a; East, 1984; Freeman, 1984).

Additional Staff Development Initiatives

It was not only through the summer training institutes and regional staff development projects that the 309 program aided staff development. For example, the 309 program supported development of specific training packages:

> to improve teachers' guidance and counseling skills (Guidance and Counseling Project . . . 1969a; 1969b; 1970; 1971; Northwest Regional Laboratory, n.d.);
>
> to prepare reading teachers to work with ABE students (International Reading Association, 1971).
>
> and to train volunteer tutors (Literacy Volunteers of America, 1971).

309 funds were also awarded for what might be termed staff development "tools." Such tools included a practical, action-oriented, evaluation guide for local ABE administrators (Knox et al., 1972) as well as a Florida State University monograph series on recruitment, dropout prevention, etc. (Schroeder & Divita, 1971). Furthermore, 309 grants supported staff development-relevant research, including a nationwide study of teacher training practices and alternatives (Spear et al, 1972a; 1972b; 1972c; 1973) and an investigation of the relationship of teachers' race to students' ABE participation (Darkenwald, 1974).

The 309 program made indirect staff development contributions as well. First, research and/or development grants to universities and colleges often helped support and direct the efforts of doctoral students and junior faculty, thereby developing a cadre of young scholars interested in ABE issues (Darkenwald, 1984; Mezirow, 1984). Second, 309 funds attracted or were used to attract ABE issues researchers and scholars from various backgrounds--e.g., community development (Kincaid, 1984) and educational futures (Ziegler, 1984).

In multiple ways, then, the 309 program increased the capabilities of ABE staff. It sponsored specific training efforts and post-secondary degree programs. It supported development of practical tools, training programs, and research projects that enhance the efficacy and understanding of practitioners. And the 309 program developed and attracted researchers and scholars to the ABE field.

Linkage Development Effects

Sometimes by intention, more often not, the 309 program helped tie together the disparate elements of the ABE field. These linkages crossed professional and state boundaries, and encouraged an awareness that a national ABE effort was underway--an awareness that there were "lots of us tending the vineyard" (DeScantis, 1984).

> The 309 program nurtured such linkages
>
> by underwriting interstate and regional projects,
>
> by supporting nationwide studies of classroom practice (Center for Adult Education, 1971) and teacher training (e.g., Spear et al., 1972a; 1972b; 1972c; 1973),
>
> by publicizing--through the APL project--a national literacy problem and a national literacy agenda,
>
> by promoting the dissemination of innovative practices and materials (General Electric, 1969; Innovations Inventory. . . , 1974),
>
> and by encouraging 309 recipients to share their results with each other and the ABE community at large (Eyster, 1984; Howard, 1984; Ziegler, 1984).

The regional staff development projects, by their very nature, tended to facilitate contacts and information flow across state boundaries (Brown, 1984; Kincaid, 1984; Miller, 1984). Also, they provided forums for practitioners, administrators, scholars, and state adult education staffs to learn and work together. The regional projects, in addition, provided forums for the dissemination of 309 developed innovations and, indeed, served as a "liaison" between 309 projects and state adult education departments (DeScantis & Qazilbash, n.d., p. 13). At times, the regional projects even provided technical assistance to other 309 efforts. According to the director of the APL project, the directors of the regional staff development projects served as a "Kitchen Cabinet" to the APL effort, offering advice and providing an "outstanding feedback loop" (Northcutt, 1984). The regional projects were themselves linked together. 309 funds supported a communications network of sorts among the ten regional projects. Directed by George Spear (1984) at the University of Missouri at Kansas City, this network offered a means whereby staff development directors could keep abreast of each others' activities, share concerns, and learn about innovations, research, and the like.

Through the regional staff development projects in particular, but through many other 309 projects as well, the 309 program helped knit ABE constituencies together (Adkins, 1984; DeScantis, 1984). The grants progran provided a connecting link among teachers, local and state administrators, federal officials, researchers, volunteers, and community groups. It provided a conduit for ideas and interchange. And it promoted recognition that no single practitioner, no lone researcher, no individual ABE program, no state was in the ABE venture on its own.

Conclusion

Overall, the federal 309 grants program deserves to be judged "a most valuable stimulus to the [ABE] field" (Aker, 1984). Whatever its shortcomings, the 309 program brought form, attention, and motivation to the national ABE effort. The 309 program nurtured, in Paul Delker's term (1984a), an "infrastructure" upon which the nascent ABE field could fruitfully grow. 309 grants enriched ABE's capabilities, increasing the numbers of prepared staff; developing degree programs; and promoting innovative instructional strategies, formats, and materials. The program opened channels for communication and sharing and thereby, developed connections linking the ABE enterprise together. Moreover, the grants program engendered a sense of "excitement" and "a supportive context" for practice, development, and research (Aker, 1984). The program also generated a focus and purpose--a needed sense of mission--for the ABE field (Miller, 1984). And these latter outcomes were as important as any of the 309's more concrete results.

Chapter 4

309 Program Problems

Introduction

Federal 309 grants ended in 1974, less than a decade after their initiation. This outcome seems to belie the claims, offered above, that the 309 program had significant impact. How important could the 309 have been, if Congress chose to eliminate it? Part of the answer lies with the fact, already noted, that Congress did not actually eliminate discretionary grants for special projects and teacher training. Instead, Congress transferred authority over such grants from federal to state authorities. This course of action suggests that the 309 program may have, in fact, been too effective--everyone, that is, wanted a piece of the proverbial pie; hence the division of the program among the states.

To be sure, though, the 309 program had its problems and shortcomings. These were such that: (a) the program did not establish its own constituency, and (b) the program alienated and antagonized the politically strongest constituency in ABE: state adult education directors. Thus, as will be seen, the 309's difficulties undermined the program and figured significantly in its demise.

Problems: Building A Constituency

For the 309 program to have endured, it required its own constituency. Given political realities, a collection or consortium of federal bureaucrats, local and state ABE representative, researchers, special project directors and the like were needed who had a strong investment in the 309 program's maintenance and who could advocate for its continuance. Unfortunately, problems with the program mitigated against the development of a pro-309 lobby. First, funding decisions did not nuture a commitment to the program. Two-thirds of special project grants from 1966-1973 went for short-term, local-level, operational support purposes (Comptroller General, 1975, pp. 13-14). And among the remaining one-third, many grants went for national planning and policy purposes. The situation was such that in one representative year, 1973, just 12% of special project grants "directly addressed" the widescale, program-level, need "for improved practices and products" (Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974, p. 7). Most 309 projects were not intended to yield "transferable results"--the kind of results, that is, that get noticed and adopted at local levels. Whatever that ultimate impact of 309 projects, 309 funding decisions did not work to make the program visible to the ABE field and thus did not work to engender a commitment to the 309 program itself.

Dissemination--or a lack thereof--also worked against the program's visibility and thereby, undermined potential support for it. The grants program was beset by dissemination difficulties, as was recognized at the time and in retrospect (Caplan, 1984; Darkenwald, 1984; Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974; Eyster, 1984; Hayes, 1969; Hoffman & Pagano, 1971; Howard, 1984). Often 309 projects did not include plans at the outset to disseminate their findings or products (Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974), and the one product required of 309 projects, a final report was--given federal guidelines--useless as a dissemination vehicle (Eyster, 1984). Not surprisingly, therefore, a 1972 nationwide survey found that only one of the seven largest 309 projects was recognized by more than 50% of local ABE directors (Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974). Another study at about the same time found little local-level use of 309 developed materials and methods (Kent, 1973).

Consequently, despite Division of Adult Education efforts to get the message out and about, the ABE community-at-large was not aware, in an informed fashion, of 309 efforts and was not, at least knowingly, adopting 309-inspired practices and materials. The linkages and informal networks fostered by the 309 program were not, in themselves, sufficient conduits for the diffusion and adoption of innovative practices and materials (see Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974). The ABE field at large did not perceive the sort of benefits from the 309 program which would have inspired an investment in its future.*

Not all 309 projects were high quality ones, and this also undermined potential support for the program. Among those interviewed for the study described herein, Mrs. Bobbi Walden (1984), a one time 309 project director and a former member of the National Adult Education Advisory Council, was particularly critical of the 309 program. She believed that much 309 money "went down the drain." Others interviewed were not so critical but several expressed concerns over the quality of one or more 309 projects (e.g., Harman, 1984). Even the regional staff development projects were critized for a lack of consistency and for not, in some cases, developing cooperative arrangements (Bosco, 1975).

Of course, some projects will always turn out to be "clunkers," for no grants program is foolproof. A grants program, however, is not supposed to be foolproof. Grants programs involve risk (Ast, 1984); they seek to see if "X" can be done--if TV can be used to recruit undereducated adults, if programmed reading materials can be effective for adult students, if community residents can serve as ABE instructors, and so on. Therefore, if a project found that some sought after "X" could not be accomplished, the project--and the grants program sponsoring it--did not necessarily fail. Unfortunately, the distinction between a negative finding and flawed research is easy to blur over.

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*The APL project might have brought considerable recognition and "loyalty" to the 309 program; however, by the time the project's results were being promoted and curricular materials developed (see, for example, Roth, 1976), the 309 program had been transferred to the states.

Regardless of the outcome of individual projects, the 309 program was in an especially difficult situation in regard to supporting quality projects. The 309 program preceded the existence of a corps of ABE-concerned researchers and developers who could "absorb"--that is, make best use of--discretionary grants (Darkenwald, 1984; also Delker, 1984b). Nonetheless, federal officials were under pressure to spend all the discretionary funds allocated to the 309 program (Parker, 1984). Consequently, some "questionable" projects were certainly funded. It was a Catch-22 situation: spend the funds, whether or not the field had the capacity to or lose them; or spend the funds, on questionable projects, and lose them.

The 309 program, in summary, suffered from: a perponderance of local, short-term projects, dissemination difficulties, and poor projects. And these were not only shortcomings, but they worked to undermine support for the 309 program. Dissemination difficulties were particularly insidious in this regard, for even when practitioners and administrators benefited from 309 efforts, they might not have been aware of the program per se or that particular projects and products had originated in 309 supported efforts. As a consequence of such problems, a broad pro-309 constituency never developed. Recipients of 309 grants, to be sure, supported the program (Delker, 1984b); however, the ABE community-at-large perceived "little benefit" from it (Comptroller General, 1975, p. 15), and therefore, developed little investment in it. Unfortunately, political skies are not so friendly that friendless programs can long endure.

Problems: Fostering Opposition

If the 309 program lacked a pro-lobby that lack did not in itself lead to the program's end. Rather, its demise was actively and increasingly, over time, sought by powerful anti-309 lobby: state adult education directors. Their antagonism to the 309 program had many sources. Some antagonism resulted from 309 projects which were deemed wasteful or ineffective (Comptroller General, 1975; Darkenwald, 1984; Delker, 1984b; Miller, 1984). And these perceptions were likely fueled by the dissemination difficulties which beset the 309 program--that is, state directors along with the rest of the ABE community were not learning as much as they could have about effective, useful 309 projects.

Antagonism also arose from Delker's activist stance. To the chagrin of state adult education directors, Delker funded projects in their states without consulting them (Brown, 1984; Miller, 1984);

funded projects that directly countered state education policy, as when he (Delker) circumvented the state of Mississippi's rules to ensure that poor, Black communities could receive 309 funding (Delker, 1984b);

funded projects that countered state and local "politics," as when 309 funds went, to the annoyance of Mayor Daley's organization, to a Jessie Jackson led group in Chicago (DeScantis, 2974, pp. 21-22);

and funded projects--the regional staff development projects, in particular--that "created a focus of potential influence within the states, but outside their [the state adult education directors'] complete control" (DeScantis, 1979, p. 23).

The regional staff development projects provoked state adult education directors in other ways as well. First, federal guidelines for the projects, which were based closely on the original Southern regional project, proved somewhat inappropriate to the unique circumstances of other regions of the country (DeScantis & Qazilbash, n.d.). Second, federal officials were unwilling to maintain funding for the regional projects beyond the initial three year cycle, and this withdrawal of funding, in at least James Parker's (1984) view, served as a final straw to mobilize state officials against the 309 program.

The APL project also affected state director's attitudes towards the 309 program. On the one hand, the project brought considerable and positive publicity to the ABE effort, all of which pleased state directors (Easter, 1984; Miller, 1984; Bob Walden, 1984); however, the project represented a federally developed curriculum for ABE, and many felt that the federal officials had no right pushing the APL approach on the states (Darkenwald, 1984). The APL venture represented one aspect of an ideological clash between state and federal officials. While "the states were moving steadily towards increased support for GED [General Equivalency Diploma] level ABE programs, "federal officials were using the 309 program to promote "a redefinition of illiteracy that was in direct contrast to . . . the GED credential pursuit" (DeScantis, 1979, pp. 16-17).

State director's ire was additionally stoked by the perception that awards were politically motivated--that is, awards went to a particular year's "in" minority group (Darkenwald, 1984) or that awards went to politically significant Congressional districts (for example, the Appalachian Adult Education Project--a perennial 309 recipient--was headquartered in the district of Congressman Carl Perkins, an ernstwhile ABE supporter). Bias was also perceived in terms of an old-boys network of sorts, whereby certain universities and individuals were supposedly favored (DeScantis, 1984; Easter, 1984; Freeman, 1984).* A bias was perceived and antagonism generated by the geographic distribution of 309 grants (Miller, 1984). Adult educators in the South, including the Office of Education regional official, strongly felt that their section of the country did not receive a fair share of 309 funds (Freeman, 1984).**

One additional source of antagonism was rather ironic. When the federal ABE program began, few states (as noted earlier) even had adult education directors and staffs. Thus, 309 staff development grants had been used to help develop and nurture state staffs (e.g., Aker & Schroeder, 1970). Indeed, Delker (1984b) had "leaned on" states to train their adult education department staffs. Over time, however, as state adult education departments grew in size and gained strength, their belief in their own capabilities also grew (DeScantis, 1974). As a result, state adult education staffs came to believe that federal officials had too much independence in regard to the 309 program (DeScantis, 1974, p. 21). State educators came to resent their lack of input into 309 priority setting (Miller, 1984)--a dissatisfaction shared by the National Advisory Council on Adult Education (Eyre, 1984).*** State officials came to feel that they, more so than Washington, best knew local needs (Darkenwald, 1984; McCune, 1984), and that they had as much right as federal officials to discretionary funds (DeScantis, 1984). Indeed, the very fact that federal officials had such funds, while they (state officials) did not, was especially frustrating to state adult education staffs (Miller, 1984). The states wanted to control such funds (Brown, 1984; Spear, 1984); they wanted to support their own agendas (Eyster, 1984) and to gain whatever influence and power accrue from holding purse strings (DeScantis, 1984, East, 1984; McCune, 1984).

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*Certainly, some institutions--for example, the Appalachian Adult Education Center at Morehead State University and the Center for Adult Education at Teachers College (Columbia University)--received substantial, repeated 309 funding; yet, both repeatedly produced high quality results (e.g., Last Gamble on Education [Mezirow, Darkenwald, & Knox, 1975]), and one of both were frequently touted by individuals interviewed for this study (e.g., Ast, 1984; Easter, 1984; Freeman, 1984; Harman, 1984).

**Ironically, the director of the Southern Regional Staff Development project felt that state adult education directors in other regions of the country were jealous of the amount of 309 funds directed to projects in the Southern states (Brown, 1984).

*** Over time, the Division of Adult Education sought to assess state and local educators' research needs (see Mezirow & Irish, 1974). The Division also, for example, required the APL project to rely on state adult education directors as an advisory group (Allen, 1984). Yet, such actions were limited in scope and occurred rather late in the 309's lifespan.

In summary, antagonism and opposition to the 309 program among state adult education departments reflected, to some extent, what might be dubbed true 309 program problems--in particular, poor dissemination. In addition, the opposition refelcted, on the one hand, a lack of state-level involvement in 309 policy and grants decisions and, on the other hand, aggressive management and use of the program by federal officials--which if not so clearly failings of the program were certainly understandable areas of conflict between federal and state officials. Furthermore, ideological conflict over the nature of ABE affected the attitudes of state officials. Also, the perception of a problem--that is, bias in the awarding of 309 grants--figured in state directors' feelings as did the belief that they and their staffs could employ discretionary monies as well as, if not better than, federal officials.

The 309 Program Reconstituted

The states' antagonism towards the 309 program was eventually translated into Congressional lobbying against the program. With no broad, effective pro-309 lobby to defend the program, the state adult education directors won out. In the 1974 Adult Education Act educational amendments, the 309 program was reconstituted from a federal into a state program.* Thereby, state officials gained the fiscal autonomy and power that they had hitherto lacked. The program that helped nurture state adult education departments was in the end, then usurped by state adult education departments. The takeover was perhaps inevitable. As state education departments grew in size, sophistication, and ability, as their budgets increased as well, they came to believe that they best understood local ABE needs, that their turfs should be respected, that they had a right to discretionary allotments, and so on. The 309 program's successes, thus, along with its failings figured heavily in its demise.

When the 309 program was transferred to the states, federal officials, it must be noted, did not altogether lose influence. After 1974, the governing legislation still spoke of employing ABE discretionary funds, state controlled or not, for nationally determined priorities, and thus, national priorities continued to be listed in the Federal Register (Parker, 1984). These priorities served, to some extent, to shape and legitimate state and local use of 309 funds (Delker, 1984a). Fortuitiously, at the time of the 309 shift, the APL--with all its attendant publicity--was coming to maturity. This circumstance served to direct many state 309 dollars to APL-motivated assessments, curricular development, and the like. By 1977, at least 120 APL-based and/or-related projects were being conducted in 34 states (Compentency-based adult education profile, 1977). Furthermore, Division of Adult Education officials have, on an ongoing basis over the last decade, suggested to state officials how discretionary funds might be used to address state or local problems and concerns (Delker, 1984a). Thus, while federal discretionary funds ended in 1974, federal officials have had a continuing if limited impact on state discretionary grants.

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*Under the 1974 amendments, Section 309 of the Adult Education Act provided the mandate for the newly authorized state grant's program; in the 1978 amendments, the authorization was shifted to Section 310 of the legislation, and Section 309 once again mandated a federal-level program, though one that has yet to be funded.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

An Overall Assessment

The pros and cons of the 309 program have now been reviewed. What's the verdict to be? Certainly, the 309 program had shortcomings. It never developed an elaborated, integrated dissemination system--one that could ensure the widespread diffusion and adoption of 309 results and products. And for a national development and dissemination effort, it probably awarded too many of its dollars to low visibility, local-impact projects. Moreover, the ABE field at large may have had too little a role and federal officials too big a role in setting 309 priorities and awarding 309 grants.

Yet, whatever its shortcomings, the 309 program contributed significantly to the ABE field. It trained substantial numbers of ABE teachers, administrators, and state adult education staffs. It developed post-secondary adult education programs, and it encouraged scholars and researchers to attend to ABE issues. The program introduced alternative programs and strategies to recruit and serve diverse groups of undereducated adults. 309 grants expanded ABE's vocabulary and resources, extending the curricula focus from basic skills to coping skills and from GED preparation to functional competencies. In such fashion, the 309 served both to highlight the multiple, interdependent needs of undereducated adults and to promote a truly adult curriculum for them. The program, additionally, afforded the ABE field with a means to assess its workings and to link together its many parts.

The hand of federal officials was sometimes heavy in these endeavors. Indeed, and APL effort was, particularly, presumptous. In what other educational arena has the federal government so clearly sought to establish the agenda for local and state educators? Yet, the ABE arena was considerably underdeveloped when federal ABE funding was initiated, and in the 1960s, an activist role was not uncommon among federal social and educational agencies--facts that must be kept in mind when judging the federal 309-program role. Also, Paul Delker and his colleagues were involved in ABE conferences and workshops and maintained close, informal relationships with practitioners, administrators, and researchers (Aker, 1984; Eyster, 1984; Delker, 1984a). Furthermore, federal officials were responsive to innovative ideas (e.g., Kincaid, 1984; Ziegler, 1984). They provided 309 recipients with support and encouragement and actively sought to disseminate 309 project results. And if they employed the 309 program to shape the ABE field, they also strove to shape the 309 program to the field's needs. The successes of the 309 program bear witness to the fruitfulness and consideration of the program's stewards.

The verdict then? The 309 program had a positive, significant impact on the ABE field. The program encouraged creativity and bears the mark of creative leadership. It helped develop the field's human, material, and strategic capabilities, and it brought the field needed publicity, cohesiveness, and direction.

The Need for a Federal Grants Program

Given the history of the 309 program, the basic recommendation of this study is that: a federal-level research and development grants program should be reinstituted. The 309 program, whatever its problems, demonstrated the efficacy of a federal grants program, and such a grants program could continue to contribute to the national ABE effort. The state-level program could continue to contribute to the national ABE effort. The state-level program, which replaced the federal one, is not sufficient. This is not to say that state discretionary funds should be eliminated; rather, the interests of the ABE field will be best served if discretionary funds are available at the state and federal levels.

The state level grants program created in 1974, which eventually became known as the 310 program, has had its difficulties. Some state educators question the worth of 310 projects, even those in their own bailiwick (Easter, 1984; Bobbi Walden, 1984). Others believe that the states have not, in awarding 310 grants, maintained clear distinctions between demonstration grants, which fall under the 310's mandate, and ongoing, operational projects, which do not (Bobbi Walden, 1984). More importantly, perhaps, most states have relatively small 310 budgets. 310 funds are not separate allocations. Instead, states are required to spend at least 10% of their annual federal ABE allocations for demonstration and training purposes.* As a result, few states have sufficient funds available to support major R&D efforts. The money is, in most cases, "watered down too much to address significant issues" (McCune, 1984). Also, those projects which are funded are not typically designed for replication or to provide a basis for replication or to provide a basis for future action (Aker, 1984).

Under the state's grants program, therefore, a gap has arisen in the ABE field's ability to examine and understand itself. Long-term development projects, basic research studies, and national policy examinations--among other efforts--are being neglected. This neglect is not the fault of the states. They understandably must focus their limited discretionary resources on immediate, programmatic needs. The gap instead reflects the absence of a federal grants program. Who but the federal government would have supported, for example, the APL research, surveys of national ABE practice, or regional staff development projects?

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*States have on an average basis allocated 13-14% of their federal ABE funds for 310 projects (Grimes, 1984).

In the mid 1970s, James Miller of Ohio led the state adult education directors' "stagebrush rebellion" against the 309 program. Today, Miller (1984) believes the state directors "overachieved" and that a role exists for a federal grants program. Other state educators agree, as do university researchers and federal officials. In fact, so does Congress, at least implicitly. In 1978, as previously noted, Congress restored the federal 309 program into the adult education legislation; however, Congress has not yet appropriated funds for the program--although such funding is likely to be restored soon (Delker, 1984a; Eyre, 1984). Yet, regardless of Congress's actions, what must be emphasized is that a lack of federal grants program hurts ABE. A state-level program is not sufficient. A federal program is also needed to support the full repertoire of critical, experimental, and demonstration efforts that a dynamic ABE field requires.

The current lack of a federal discretionary grants program has done more than forestall specific research and development activities. The 309 program facilitated communication and interchange across geographic boundaries and among different ABE constituencies. With the 309's demise, these linkages weakened. Regional projects of all sorts ceased, eliminating a major forum for interstate cooperation and sharing. Similarly, researchers and project developers no longer receive much encouragement and support--including the necessary travel budgets--to disseminate their efforts. According to Gary Eyre (1984), for many years executive director of the National Advisory Council on Adult Education, the result has been that state and local adult educators have lost the ability to know what is going on elsewhere and that "no common pool of information" remains. Similarly, state and federal officials and academicians identify the 309's demise with a drift towards "parochialism" (Spear, 1984), a lack of dissemination efforts (Parker, 1984; Bobbi Walden, 1984), and an inability to know what's going on in the ABE community (Aker, 1984).

To reiterate, then, the ABE field needs a federal-level discretionary grants program. The need exists because the current state-level programs are limited in the types of projects that can be supported and the impact that such projects can have. The need also arises because a federal grants program is best able to support long-term, large-scale development and demonstration activities and because a federal program fosters linkages that facilitate communication and spread innovation.

Program Recommendations

A federal discretionary grants program for adult basic education should be reestablished. To best gain support, spark innovation, and positively inform policy and practice, a revived program should serve two basic goals: it should both fill in the gaps and should spread the good news. That is, a federal grants program should undertake what state grants programs do not or cannot do and should promulgate what state programs have done well.

Recommendations based on these goals are offered below. They address the mission and structure of a grants program. They draw on the experience of the original 309 program and on the thoughtful considerations of some who guided the 309 effort, who received its funds, and who were served by it. Before examining the recommendations in detail, it is useful to briefly review them:

A: A federal ABE grants program should support needed research and development projects which are beyond the resources and interests of state grants programs

- A-1 Institute of participatory priority setting process
- A-2 Institute a participatory grants award process
- A-3 Recognize goals and needs of ABE constituencies at large
- A-4 Recognize concerns of state adult education directors
- A-5 Fund basic and long-term research and unsolicited proposals
- A-6 Study the federal 309 program's history
- A-7 Conduct a state-of-the-art survey of adult basic education

B: A federal ABE grants program should legitimize and promote promising practices

- B-1 Establish an ongoing evaluation capacity
- B-2 Establish an ongoing dissemination capacity
- B-3 Establish an adult basic education clearinghouse

Recommendation A: A federal ABE grants program should support needed projects which are beyond the reources and/or interests of state grants programs. To be dynamic and creative, the ABE field needs to be able to critically examine itself and to continually broaden its practical and theoretical knowledge. To these ends, the ABE field requires an active research and development component, one which can study national policy issues, underwrite long-term development projects, probe basic research questions, and support demonstration activities inside and outside of the public education sector, including in union settings and among volunteer groups.

Such an agenda cannot be sustained by state grants programs. State officials are, rightly, concerned with immediate, programmatic needs, and they are not likely to apply their limited discretionary funds to certain issues (typically, regional and national ones) and certain activities (such as, basic research or long-term development*). Only a federal grants program of basic research (e.g., on adult learning), applied research (e.g., the development of teacher certification competencies or of innovative curricula), and policy research (e.g., surveys of national practice). A federal grants program is needed then to support efforts that would otherwise not be attempted and to meet needs that would otherwise not be met.

While a revived federal grants program is thus strongly recommended, this report cannot recommend, with one exception (see Recommendation A-7, p. 45), specific projects for such a program to undertake. First, the possibilities are numerous. The individuals interviewed for this report suggested many and, sometimes, contradictory projects for a revived grants program (see Appendix A). More importantly, if a federal grants program is to generate support and have impact, its goals and undertakings must reflect the involvement of the ABE community at large. Therefore, it would be both presumptuous and self-defeating to advocate, herein, specific development and research priorities. What can be recommended, however, is a structure--one with the means to identify needed efforts and with the capacity to engage in them. Thus, the recommendations which follow seek to enable a federal grants program to adopt a relevant, flexible research and development agenda that will serve and receive the support of the ABE field.

A-1 Institute a participatory priority-setting process. To be most effective, a discretionary grants program needs to be grounded in a well thought out, systematic set of goals and priorities. Thus, at the outset, it is important "to develop a framework for identifying areas in ABE where it would be appropriate to sponsor projects" (General Electric, 1969, pp. 42-43, see also, Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974). However, if a new 309 program is to gain widespread support, federal officials can no longer, on their own, set the program's goals. In the past, this policy caused resentment and undermined efforts to direct the program to the needs of the ABE field. Program goals should be set, as many individuals interviewed for this report recommended, in a participatory fashion (e.g., Eyre, 1984; McCune, 1984). The process should involve diverse members of the ABE community, including state and local ABE administrators, teachers and counselors, students and former students, volunteer and paraprofessionals, researchers and scholars. Such groups could be involved through surveys of their opinions and concerns. Their representatives could serve on a program-advisory panel, or they could participate in conferences designed to guide program policies and priorities. If ABE legislation can, as it has since 1978, require participatory planning from state agencies, then a federal ABE grants program can partake of such planning. Ultimately, if the program is to serve the ABE field, the field must help shape the program.

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*Populous states, which as a result have relatively large discretionary grants budgets, may be able to support relatively ambitious development efforts--as California has, in fact, done (Delker, 1984a; McCune, 1984).

The Division of Adult Education must, then, surrender some of the authority it once had over a federal ABE grants program; however, the Division should still play a significant role. Division staffers bring a national perspective to bear on ABE issues, and that perspective needs to inform goal setting. Moreover, Paul Delker, James Parker, and others at the Division supervised the original 309 program, and as such, have experience in setting 309-type priorities, in developing long-term and large-scale projects, and in disseminating project results. This unique experience should not be lost but should be employed to the advantage of a revived federal effort. Thus, the goals and prioritieis of a renewed grants program should bear a collaborative stamp, reflecting appreciable input from ABE's varied constituencies as well as from federal adult education officials.

A-2 Institute a participatory grants awards process. No longer should federal officials alone decide which proposals to fund. Instead, representatives from the ABE community should be involved. Just as the field should have input into priority setting, so too should the field--practitioners, administrators, and researchers, among others--have input into the awarding of specific grants. Indeed, it will be particularly valuable to involve experts in the evaluation of proposals--that is, to have researchers involved in assessing research proposals, curriculum developers involved in assessing curriculum development proposals, and so forth.

This opening up of the awards process should, in itself, give a renewed grants program increased support from ABE constituents. And greater use of peer expertise should also help in the selection of creditable, strong proposals, which are likely both to contribute to the field and to reflect well on the grants program. Furthermore, a participatory-selection process should stave off allegations, made in the past, that award decisions were biased. All-in-all, then, an opened up proposal selection process should help an ABE federal grants program gain in support and in project quality.

A-3 Recognize goals and needs of ABE constituencies at large. Participatory processes of setting priorities and awarding grants are not, unfortunately, sufficient to provide a renewed federal ABE grants program with support and impact. The priorities that are set and the grants that are awarded are themselves significant. When recently interviewed, a researcher wanted federal funds for adult learning studies (Harman, 1984); a volunteer program executive, for program development and technical assistance (Crouch, 1984); a state adult education director, for ABE impact data (McCune, 1984); and a federal official, for analyses of computer-assisted instruction policy (Delker, 1984a). Different ABE constituencies have different needs from a demonstration and development program. In turn, those who shape the grants program needs to appreciate these differences as well as regional differences and differences among client groups.

The task will not be easy. Current proposals before Congress would result in a $3 to $5 million annual budget for a revived 309 program (Parker, 1984). A budget of this size--only about half that of the original 309 program--would limit the number of projects that could be conducted and would make it difficult for the program to serve the priorities of all ABE constituencies.

To cope with this situation, a revived grants program can emphasize truly national priorities--for example, priorities which will inform national ABE policy and practice, such as the APL project and the Mezirow-directed national survey of program practices (Center for Adult Education, 1971; also Mezirow, Darkenwald, & Knox, 1975). Priorities can also be emphasized which involve broad segments of the ABE community, as did the Appalachian Adult Education Center and the regional staff development projects. Furthermore, efforts can be made to ensure that priorities reflect diverse concerns and do not focus on any one substantive domain--e.g., federal policy making or life-skills curricular development. Overall, a renewed 309 program will best succeed if its priorities serve to acknowledge and legitimize the multiple members of the ABE community.

A-4 Recognize concerns of state adult education directors. Additional steps may be required to ensure that a revived grants program is sensitive to the concerns and needs of state adult education directors. State directors are not likely to oppose such a program, insofar as they now have their own discretionary funds and because, at least by some accounts, federal/state tensions have abated from what they once were (Miller, 1984). Yet, federal officials cannot affort to be passive in this regard.

To prevent history--or at least a little bit of it--from repeating itself, state directors should certainly be involved in the priority-setting and grants-awards processes. In the case of potential demonstration projects, a prospective grantee might even be required to submit a copy of his or her proposal to the appropriate state education department, which would then have the option of commenting on the proposal's merits and/or grantee's capabilities. Yet, state education departments neither individually nor as a group should have a veto over federally supported projects. The arena of ABE extends beyond their domain and includes volunteer groups, community-based agencies, community colleges, unions, etc.

State directors and their staffs should also be kept up to date on project efforts and results. Dissemination recommendations listed below may be useful in this regard. Furthermore, the recommended dissemination system--as well as recommended evaluation and clearinghouse capabilities--could also provide means for the federal grants program to support the existing state grants program. Through such strategies, state adult education directors could become invested in and supportive of a renewed grants program.

A-5 Fund basic and long-term research and unsolicited proposals. To serve the needs of the ABE field and to help the field identify its needs, a revived grants program must be able to support a full array of research and development activities. For this to occur, a revived program must not be hampered by research restrictions that encumbered the 309 program; conversely, a revived program must be able to maintain the 309-program policy of supporting unsolicited proposals.

To be more specific, a revived federal grants program should be able to support basic research activities. This was not so under the 309 program. The term "research" had been deliberately excluded from the original 309 mandate (Delker, 1984a), and thus federal officials held that 309 monies could go only to applied and not basic research. The 309 program, thereby, could support the development of curricula to help adults learn but not examinations of how adults learn.

To limit the activities of researchers and project developers constrains their responsiveness, effectiveness, and potential impact. Moreover, those who set the priorities and award the grants for a new federal grants program should not have to decide between applied and basic research.* The program mandate should permit both. It should offer the flexibility whereby a federal grants program can support, if those responsible decide, practical efforts and theoretical ones, projects of immediate consequence and of long-range potential, and, in general, a full range of research and developmetal activities.

Along with flexibility, researchers and project developers also need time. As a historical perspective makes clear, projects of value often take time--time to plan, to hire and train staff, to implement, to assess, to revise, to package, to publicize, and to help others adopt. Under the original 309 program, projects frequently were not funded for sufficient time periods to complete all these steps (Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1974). For most of the 309 program's life span, grants could only be awarded on a yearly basis. Multi-year projects had to be annually re-funded. This process discouraged some researchers from seeking 309 funds (Comptroller General, 1975), and it required 309 recipients to devote considerable time and effort, yearly, to maintain their funding.

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*How rigorously federal officials actually distinguished between applied and basic research is open to debate. Did the effort to identify adult functional competencies constitute applied research? And what about the investigation leading to Last Gamble on Education (Mezirow, Darkenwald, & Knox, 1975)?

A renewed 309 program should offer a more supportive structure for multi-year grants. Thus, multi-year awards should be, at least, possible, and reasonable requirements should be established for projects to maintain funding. Certainly, projects should be accountable on an ongoing basis, and there should be no absolute guarantees of continued funding. Nonetheless, projects should be able to feel secure in their funding if, for example, they accomplish tasks on an agreed-upon schedule, or if they meet with the approval of a closely involved monitor or, even, an independent advisory board. Whatever procedure is adopted, multi-year projects should not have to annually reapply in full to maintain funding. Instead, project staffs should be able to devote their efforts to accomplishing those goals for which they were awarded a grant in the first place.

Along with its other recommended characteristics, a revived grants program should have funds available for unsolicited proposals. To be sure, most discretionary funds should be directed towards designated priorities--priorities which have been developed in a participatory manner and which, thereby, work to offer direction and cohesion to the ABE field. Yet, if all discretionary funds are directed towards proscribed priorities, individual initiative will be overly constrained. Thus, a percentage of the annual grants allocation--perhaps 10% to, even, 20%--should be set aside for unsolicited proposals. The availability of such funds will serve to stimulate researchers, program developers, and others, and the funds may prompt creative and innovative initiatives. Such funds may also serve to infuse the ABE field with challenging new perspectives--by, for example, engaging cognitive psychologists or educational anthropologists to address ABE issues. Funding unsolicited proposals will enable the grants program not merely to serve the existing ABE agenda--consenually established or not--but also to help define the agenda for the future.

A-6 Study the federal 309 program's history. Those who ignore history are not only condemned to repeat it but to waste scarce funds in so doing. Thus, the history of the original 309 program should inform a rejuvenated grants program. The 309's past is particularly relevant in regard to dissemination matters. As even a cursory glance backwards indicates, dissemination problems beset and eventually helped undermine the 309 program. Under a revived grants program, therefore, those who establish priorities, award grants, and, even, submit proposals should all be encouraged--if not required--to learn about the 309 program's dissemination-related problems.

Paul Delker and other long term members of the Division of Adult Education can certainly be helpful in this regard but so, too, can the literature of the original program. Mezirow et al.'s (n.d.) model dissemination project, which relied on direct technical assistance at the program level to identify problems and develop solutions, remains relevant. Also, still relevant are the remedies proposed in Darkenwald, Beder, and Adelman's (1974) study of 309 dissemination problems. The researchers recommended, for example, that proposal evaluation should include consideration of a project's "disseminability" and that project proposals should identify intended audiences and outline dissemination plans.

Knowledge of the 309's history can help a renewed grants program avoid waste and duplication of effort. Why propose to undertake a project and, certainly, why fund one that, in fact, has been previously undertaken? The 309's history can, moreover, guide future efforts. It can suggest areas in which federal projects have been particularly effective--e.g., regional efforts. Or, to take another example, familiarity with 309-funded teacher competency studies (Mocker, 1974; Mocker, et al., 1974; Mocker & Zinn, 1975; Zinn, 1974a; 1974b) may suggest new projects in that vein or may offer bases for evaluating proposals on teacher competency. The 309's history highlights important side effects that can accrue from some projects--e.g., the development of linkages and the training of young researchers--and, thereby, the need to consider possible unintended project outcomes when evaluating proposals. In addition, knowledge of the 309's past can provide a sense of continuity--a linkage of the most important sort; and it can, furthermore, enable the ABE field to develop a literature of its own, one which can inform practice and policy. In multiple ways, then, the 309's past can and should inform and strengthen a restored program's future.

A-7 Conduct a state-of-the-art survey of adult basic education. An effective grants program needs not only to be familiar with the past but also well versed in the present. What is the condition of ABE today? Who are today's students? What do they seek? How do their skills, concerns, backgrounds, and goals compare to students of ten or twenty years ago? How well prepared are the current crop of teachers and administrators? Where do they get their training? How many have full-time ABE positions? What career opportunities are available for them? What about local programs? Are they bigger or smaller than they once were? What materials, methods, and approaches are they employing? Which are effective? How--if at all--do programs use technological innovations? What differences exist between rural and urban programs, and between programs in different regions of the country?

The answers to such questions should have a significant impact on a revived grants program. For example, if staff development remains, as some would contend (e.g., Mezirow, 1984), an important need of the ABE field, then a revived grants program might focus on staff development projects; however, if staff development needs are not pressing, as others maintain (e.g., Eyre, 1984), then discretionary funds could be directed elsewhere. The state of the ABE art, therefore, has important implications for those who would set and influence a grants program's priorities and funding decisions.

The field's current state, unfortunately, is not well-known now (Aker, 1984; Eyre, 1984).* Consequently, a federal-level grants program not only requires a state-of-the-art description of ABE, but the grants program itself must, likely, develop that account. Indeed, this is the type of project--a national survey--that requires a federal-level grants program.

In developing an account of ABE to serve itself, a grants program would be well serving the field. Many adult educators believe there is a strong need today to "paint the national picture" of the ABE--where its been, is now, and is heading (Eyre, 1984). To set ABE policy generally, it is necessary to chart the field's progress or lack thereof (Mezirow, 1984) and to evaluate the overall system of literacy delivery. As part of an overall survey of the field, it would be particularly appropriate if a renewed grants program helped assess the impact of and the federal role in such 309-program supported efforts as the APL project and Competency Based Adult Education (Delker, 1984a; Parker, 1984). Overall, then, a state-of-the-art review will provide a basis for setting ABE's course and for determining the goals and undertakings of a federal ABE grants program.

Recommendation B: A federal grants program should legitimize and promote promising practices. In addition to undertaking what is not otherwise being done, a federal ABE grants program should also disseminate the best of what is being done. That is, federal funds should help spread effective programmatic, curricular, and staff development practices. Such practices have been developed at local and state levels, as the National Adult Literacy Study, for example, is finding.** However, no permanent ABE-focused mechanism exists to bring such practices to the attention of the ABE community-at-large. A federal ABE grants program could and should fill the gap; it should publicize and diffuse effective materials and methods. In so doing, the federal effort would be directly serving the needs of ABE practitioners and students, which is not only a significant outcome but one likely to gain support for the grants program. Moreover, a mechanism developed to promulgate state and locally developed practices could serve double duty; for, it could also be employed to disseminate the findings and products of projects funded through the grants program itself. Past experience indicate the importance of having a means for disseminating the results of federally supported ABE innovations.

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*Development Associates 1980 survey afforded the most recent broad look into the ABE endeavor. While a significant study of administrative and legal issues, it does not provide the insights into ABE practices, programs, and needs offered by two, decade-old staples: The Last Gamble on Education (Mezirow, Darkenwald, & Knox, 1975) and A Target Population in Adult Education . . . (National Advisory Council on Adult Education, 1974).

**Dr. Renee Lerche, personal communication.

If prior experience suggests the importance of dissemination to spread of innovation, it also suggests that dissemination is not easy. First, quality or effectiveness must be established. That is, does some newly developed practice or materials, in fact, do what its advocates claim? Yet, effectiveness does not ensure dissemination. Appropriateness, packaging, availability, presentation, and support services all matter. Consequently, if a federal grants program is to effectively promote effective practices, the following components or capacities are required.

Establish an ongoing evaluation capacity. Before federal funds are used to promote innovative ABE products and methods, the validity of said products and methods should be established. Do they accomplish what their developers claim? Are they, moreover, transferable? For example, can curricular materials or staff training methods developed by a local ABE program or a state ABE staff be successfully employed at other sites and locales? The need for such assessments requires that an evaluation capacity be an integral part of efforts to promote innovations.

The evaluation of (potentially) effective, innovative practices will involve more than just assessment. It will frequently also require the capacity or ability to identify and/or develop appropriate measures and standards for making assessments. How, for example, should a new coping-skills curriculum be evaluated--in terms of students' performance on a test (perhaps, a standardized one) or in the real world? And what about a staff training program? Should it be evaluated in terms of increases in teachers' knowledge, students' achievement, or, even, students' retention? Even when it comes to assessing reading and arithmetic curricula, standardized ABE-oriented test instruments may exist, but they could certainly be improved. To deal with such issues, an evaluation capacity or process is not only necessary, but it must include expertise in both evaluation and in adult basic education.

Depending upon funding availability and decisions made about other aspects of an overall dissemination system, an evaluation capacity could be organized on a regional basis, as were the 309 regional staff development projects, or on a national basis, as is the federally supported Joint Dissemination Review Panel. An evaluation capacity could also function in different ways. Following the model of the Joint Dissemination Review Panel, an ABE evaluation system could simply review evidence--test results, etc.,--that project developers gather and present.* Alternatively, a more activist approach could be employed whereby evaluation experts themselves help collect the evidence. Indeed, the evaluation experts could take on a technical assistance role. They could become involved early in the development of local and state-supported innovations, helping project staffs decide on appropriate documentation, evaluation strategies, and assessment tools.

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*The Joint Dissemination Review Panel process, in fact, has been employed to validate several ABE-curricular developments, beginning with an APL-based curriculum (United States Office of Education, 1976). The Panel's reliance on standardized test data limits its utility to the ABE field.

The evaluation expertise established to assess state and local efforts could also serve federally funded grants projects (see Recommendation A, p. 39). In such cases, evaluation experts would be particularly valuable for formative evaluation purposes--that is, for reviewing and improving ongoing efforts of individual projects as well as the overall grants program. The evaluation capacity would thereby be directed towards improved functioning of research and development efforts. Yet, summative evaluations would also be required to assess project outcomes and, when appropriate for dissemination purposes, to validate such outcomes. Summative evaluations were almost always done with the original 309 program projects but in a fragmented, ad hoc fashion. If a revived grants program institutionalizes an evaluation capacity, the opportunity exists for expertise to flourish, to have significant impact, and for a body of evaluation data to grow systematically and be readily available.

Establish an ongoing dissemination capacity. If a federal ABE grants program is to promote state and locally developed innovations--and to promote federally funded innovations as well--then more than an evaluation capacity, or system, is required. Innovations, no matter how effective, do not become known and adopted on their own. Moreover, as the original 309 program found, those with the skills to develop innovations do not necessarily possess the skills to promote said innovations. As a result, a dissemination system or capacity should be established to accompany the aforementioned evaluation one.

A dissemination capacity would keep abreast of, spread information on, and help diffuse innovations (Aker, 1984; Crouch, 1984). It might involve, in part, a mechanism for dissemination--perhaps, a practitioner-oriented newsletter or regular workshops. The capacity might also involve dissemination experts who, in a manner akin to National Diffusion Network facilitators, would help state and local ABE practitioners to learn about and implement innovative approaches. Dissemination experts could, in addition, help project staffs to design and implement dissemination strategies for locally developed innovations.

As with an evaluation system, a dissemination system could be organized on a regional or a national basis. A regional approach would have the advantage of being physically close to both the projects to be disseminated and to ABE administrators and practitioners. Moreover, such a system could be made sensitive to regional differences in program organization and operations. Regionally organized staff development proved effective in the past, and a regionally organized dissemination system was tried with success, though on a limited, trial basis (Mezirow et al., n.d.). Yet, a regionally organized system would be expensive, and it is not the only alternative. A national dissemination capacity could be tried--one modeled perhaps after the National Center for Research in Vocational Education at Ohio State University. Among other advantages, a national approach would be easiest to integrate with the clearinghouse capacity recommended below.

However organized, a dissemination system should well serve a revived federal grants program. For a new grants program to gain support and be effective, project results must become known, recommnedations found useful and acted upon, and products distributed and employed (Mezirow, 1984; Miller, 1984). And for these to occur, an effective means of dissemination, as is recommended herein, must be available. Dissemination experts, moreover, could lend their expertise to the setting of program priorities and the selection of projects to fund. In this fashion, the grants program might be made sensitive to dissemination issues at the outset.

Establish and adult basic education clearinghouse capacity. Those who would develop, evaluate, disseminate, and adopt innovative practices need access to that which has gone on in the past and that which is going on in the present. To this end, the federal government should support, as it did in the mid 1970s, an ABE clearinghouse. Such a clearinghouse would collect and store the literature of ABE, including project records, products, evaluations, research reports, and similar materials.

The clearinghouse should not be just a repository or warehouse; instead, it should offer an accessible, critically examined collection. Thus, the clearinghouse would review, evaluate, and, most importantly, keep the ABE community informed of its holdings. Annotated indexes and subject-area bibliograhpies, for example, would thus be developed and distributed to state ABE officials, local practitioners, and researchers. The clearinghouse's collection, moreover, would be readily accessible--directly from the clearinghouse or, perhaps, through a computerized newtork or the ERIC system.

Although a clearinghouse is needed to promote and spread innovative practices, particularly those developed at state and local levels, a clearinghouse is also required to inform policy decisions and analytic efforts. As recommended above (Recommendation A-6, p. 44), the history of the 309 program can be a useful resource for a revived grants program. Unfortunately, the lack of a well-maintained, well-organized ABE clearinghouse makes that history difficult to access.

Many early ABE 309 project reports were, apparently, never collected in the first place (Darkenwald, Beder, & Adelman, 1984). Those that are in existence are difficult to track down. The majority of the 309 project reports and related materials employed herein were obtained through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service or through a collection of ABE materials at Montclair State College (Upper Montclair, NJ). The ERIC system, while certainly useful, lacks many 309 documents, and those 309 reports that are in ERIC are not identified as such, which makes ERIC cumbersome to employ. The collection at Montclair State College consists, in large measure, of materials assembled in the early 1970s, when the college had a 309 grant for a National ABE Multi-Media Center. The collection is extensive, includes materials not likely to be found elsewhere, and was an invaluable resource for this study. Montclair State College is to be commended for maintaining these materials. Yet, the collection is difficult to access except in person; moreover, the collected materials are not well-indexed and to exploit them fully requires the time to review them piece-by-piece, shelf-by-shelf.

The proposed ABE clearinghouse should be connected to the previously recommended dissemination and evaluation capacities. In fact, the three would be most effective if closely related. Thus, the clearinghouse would be a logical source of materials to be disseminated. Also, it should, as a consequence of its own activities, gain expertise in packaging product reports and products--an expertise which could assist both project staffs and dissemination agents. Furthermore, the clearinghouse's annotated indexes and packaging efforts should be informed by project evaluations. Finally, the clearinghouse could maintain and provide access to an up-to-date collection of materials on developing programmatic innovations and on dissemination and evaluation strategies, including reports of federally sponsored dissemination and evaluation projects.

The hitherto cited National Center for Research in Vocational Education offers one model, deserving of study, for integrating dissemination, evaluation, and clearinghouse capacities. These capacities were also linked together, to some extent, in 309 funded efforts, including Project CABEL (Griswold, 1969) and the National Multimedia Center for Adult Education (Montclair State College), which remains in operation, without federal funds, on a limited basis. Such efforts also deserve study.

Conclusion

In summation, a federal grants program has positively contributed to ABE's past and should be revived. The state grants programs have not proven sufficient to support a broad research and development agenda and to facilitate the flow of information and innovation. A federal grants program is thus required to undertake policy analyses, basic research, long-term efforts, and other projects which state grants programs will not or cannot fund; a federal grants program is also needed to validate and disseminate promising program curricular, and staff development practices developed at state and local (and federal) levels. A federal grants program can thus help the ABE field to develop its resources and to disseminate the resources which it already has developed. The recommendations offered above aim to meet these goals and, in so doing, to enable a federal grants program to both well serve the ABE field and to win the support of the diverse constituencies that comprise the ABE community.

Appendix A

Project Candidates

The study reported herein did not seek, for the most part, to develop recommendations for specific projects that a rejuvenated 309-type program should undertake. Nevertheless, in an effort to understand what type of federal grants program might be needed now, the individuals interviewed for this study were asked to suggest specific projects that a renewed federal grants program should support. The responses obtained are a resource, representing the opinions of informed federal and state officals, former 309 project staff members, and academicians and researchers. These opinions are offered below, not as recommendations of this report but as candidate proposals for the consideration of those who may direct a new 309 effort and for those who may seek its funds. The ideas are meant to be suggestive and provocative. As such, some are inconsistent with others; some are rather wistful and unlikely ever to be realized. A few, it should be noted, were obtained from project reports and evaluations of the original 309 program. However, whether obtained from recent interviews or from the 309 literature, the suggestions to follow are intended as "food for thought," and, it is hoped, fodder for action.

Overall Program Goals. Direct the federal grants program towards "coordinating and developing systems (Delker, 1984), towards influencing federal and state policy (Rivera, 1984), and towards developing national awareness of the illiteracy problem (Miller, 1984). Only fund projects with a national scope (Bobbi Walden, 1984); only fund projects based on demonstrable need at the practitioner level (DeScantis, 1984). Assign the bulk of 309 funds to the National Adult Education Center, as in European countries and elsewhere (Darkenwald, 1984) or perhaps modeled on the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (Parker, 1984).

Interstate Efforts. Promote interstate communication (Mezirow, 1984) and interchange and training (Rivera, 1984). Develop a networking system which involves the ABE community at large (Spear, 1984). Support regionally specific projects (Aker, 1984; Eyster, 1984).

Interagency and Collaborative Efforts. Coordinate ABE efforts with other education and community agencies (Eyster, 1984; Kincaid, 1984) Bobbi Walden, 1984) and with business and labor groups (Ast, 1984; Eyre, 1984). Explore non-public school ABE (Mezirow, 1984), and integrate ABE into ongoing community groups (Aker, 1984). Help states develop legislation which facilitates collaborative arrangements (Delker, 1984).

Practitioner- and Administrator-Related Effort. Provide staff development (Mezirow, 1984)--especially on a regional basis (Easter,1984)--to promote competency based education (Shelton, 1984), to strengthen state adult education department staffs (Aker, 1984), and to develop minority-group administrator and policymakers (Spear, 1973, p. 18). Contrariwise, do not employ 309 program for staff development uses (Eyre, 1984; Delker, 1984a). Support research on effective teaching strategies (Bob Walden, 1984); do not support such research (Miller, 1984). Offer career guidance to ABE personnel, (Spear, 1973, P. 18), and explore alternative career strategies--for example, develop positions involving 1/2 day teaching youth and 1/2 day teaching adults (Aker, 1984). "Architect" a competency based teacher certification system, one which could certify paraprofessionals (Delker, 1984a).

Student Outreach and Recruitment. Promote strategies to encourage ABE participation by the undereducated in general (Kirscher, 1976, p. 18), by low level readers in particular (Rivera, 1984; Bob Walden, 1984) and by special populations, including: Hispanics, women, military personnel, convicts, and the physically and mentally handicapped (Eyre, 1984; Miller, 1984). Develop supplements, aimed at illiterate and functionally illiterate adults, for inclusion in local newspapers (Aker, 1984).

Basic Research Efforts. Fund basic research projects (Darkenwald, 1984), including studies: on the adult learning process (Shelton, 1984); on the impact of rewards--e.g., free day care--on learning (Miller, 1984); and on how illiterate and functinally illiterate adults function daily (Harman, 1984). Examine impact or lack thereof of earlier theoretical studies on practice (Aker, 1984).

Technologically-Oriented Efforts. Survey current application in ABE of computer-assisted instruction, educational television, etc. (Delker, 1984; Parker, 1984). Assess effectiveness of computerassisted instruction (Lumsden, 1984), and technologically oriented home learning centers (Ast, 1984). Explore how computer-assisted instruction can be employed in ABE (Eyre, 1984; Miller, 1984) and with different ABE populations (Aker, 1984). Train content specialists and computer programmers to develop ABE software (Lumsden, 1984).

Appendix B

Project Candidates

Winthrop Adkins, Teachers College, Columbia University (New York), received 309 funds to help develop the Life Skills Program.

George Aker, Professor of Adult Education, Florida State University (Tallahassee), directed 309 supported training for state adult education directors.

Bob G. Allen, directed the Division of Adult and Community Education, Texas Education Agency (Austin) since 1971.

Raymond J. Ast, Montclair State College (Upper Montclair, NJ), conducted a 309 supported demonstration of ABE learning centers and helped organize a conference bringing together adult educators and educational publishers.

Edward T. Brown, a private consultant (Stone Mountain, GA), directed the original regional 309 staff development project in the South.

Stanley Caplan, Research Director, Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory's (Albuquerque, NM) multi-state 309 project to assist undereducated Mexican-Americans.

Jinx (Helen) Crouch, Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers of America (Syracuse, NY).

Gordon G. Darkenwald, Professor of Adult Education, Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ) particpated in and conducted 309 projects for the Center for Adult Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Paul Delker, long term Director, Division of Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education (Washington, DC).

Vincent DeScantis, Campus Executive Officer, Shenago Valley Campus, Pennsylvania State University (Shenago, PA), directed the 309 regional staff development project in HEW Region 11.

J. K. East, former Adult Education Director for the State of South Carolina.

Luke Easter, has long directed adult education for the Tennessee State Department of Education (Nashville).

Gary Eyre, former Executive Director, The President's National Advisory Council on Adult Education, is currently Executive Director of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (Washington, DC).

George Eyster, Morehead State University (Morehead, KY), directed Appalachian Adult Education Center.

Ted Freeman, Atlanta (GA), a Regional Representative for the U.S. Secretary of Education.

David Harman, Hebrew University (Jerusalem), originated the APL concept and helped developed Project AIM.

Ronald Howard, Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc. (Philadelphia), directed the Adult Armchair Education Project and Project T.U.N.E.

Gladys Irish, Kingsborough Community College (Brooklyn, NY), a former member of the Center for Adult Education, Teachers College, Columbia, University.

James Kincaid, head of the Education Department, College of Professional Studies, Colorado State University (Fort Collins), directed Project Communi-Link and Project Act.

Barry Lumsden, Professor of Higher Education, North Texas University, formerly the Adult Learning Center director, North Carolina State University.

Donald McCune, Director of Adult and Continuing Education for the California State Department of Education (Sacramento).

Jack Mezirow, Director, Center for Adult Education, Teachers College, Columbia University and leader of several large-scale 309 surveys.

James Miller, Director, Division of Education Services, Ohio Department of Education (Columbus) and has long overseen Ohio's ABE efforts.

Norville Northcutt, Director, Data Services, Austin Community College, directed the APL study from 1972-1976.

James Parker, staff member of the Division of Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education (Washington, DC).

William Rivera, Associate Professor, Department of Agriculture and Extension Services, University of Maryland (College Park), directed Project AIM.

Elaine Shelton, (Austin, TX) former member of the APL research team and remains involved in the dissemination of APL based programming.

George Spear, University of Missouri at Kansas City, directed the 309 funded National Teacher Training Study as well as the consortium of regional 309 staff development projects.

Bob W. Walden, Coordinator, Adult Basic Education, Alabama Department of Education (Montgomery).

Bobbi Walden, Coordinator of Community Education for the State of Alabama (Montgomery), a former member of the National Advisory Council on Adult Education and developer of a 309 funded ABE learning center program.

Warren Ziegler, President, Futures-Invention Associates (Denver, CO), directed the 309 supported investigation of the future of adult education.

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